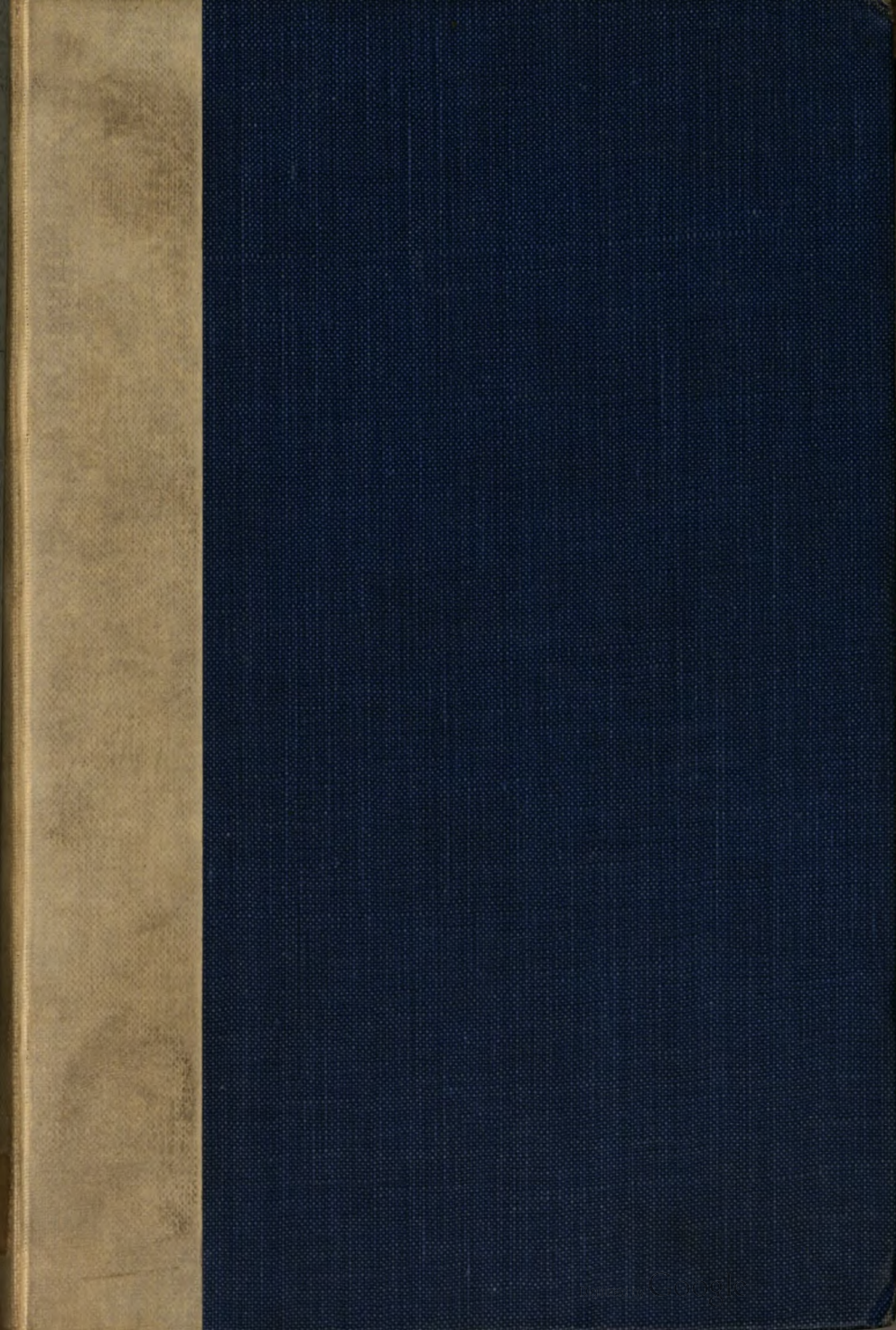

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THE EARLY HISTORY OF TRANSPORT AND SUPPLY

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By
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FOREWORD

TO-DAY, when the problem of maintenance of an army in the field has become so complex as to demand the most detailed consideration, it is of absorbing interest to study the early history of transport and supply.

So far as I am aware this is the first attempt that has been made to penetrate the obscurity which has hitherto enveloped the subject. The story now unfolded brings to light material that was badly needed to fill the gaps in our knowledge of early administrative problems and procedure. Such a contribution will be welcomed by all students of military history, and by none more than those of us whose duty it is to see that nothing is lacking in our study of the problems of transport and supply, past and present. I hope this little book will be perused by every R.A.S.C. officer.

G. F. DAVIES, Major-General,
Director of Supplies and Transport.



The Early History of Transport and Supply

PRIMITIVE armies live by plunder pure and simple, which is both wasteful and dangerous, for, if you eat up a country during your advance, you are likely to starve (as some of our mediæval armies found to their cost), should you be compelled to retreat over the same ground. Very early, indiscriminate plunder gave way to more or less organized plunder—the filling of magazines by requisition. Therewith financial interference followed immediately, the soldier suffering a stoppage of pay in return for victuals issued. It was then discovered that a population would fill magazines more readily if paid for their produce, and that this system was in the end both cheaper and safer, since the villagers were not rendered hostile by pillage and oppression. An official, we may call him either by the old name of Harbinger or Purveyor, or by the newer name of Commissary, was appointed to manage this business. Thereby Supply became more or less organized, though it was more than ever a matter of finance.

But even the filling of magazines demands transport, much more the conveying of the contents

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of a magazine to the mouth. A prolonged siege might necessitate the tapping of wider areas of supply, and, to do so effectually, the resources of the country's transport must also be drawn upon, either by requisition or by hire. An enemy too might devastate the country around their stronghold, and provisions must then be brought with the army that was to attack him. Moreover even primitive armies required transport for the conveyance of baggage and necessaries of various kinds; and we read in the book of Samuel that Saul on one occasion "lay within the place of the waggons," while David in one of his raids left a third of his force to "tarry by the stuff," or, as we should say, for a baggage- or depot-guard. Thus it became necessary to organize transport as well as supply, and a Commissary was appointed for the purpose. Gradually, though slowly owing to the lack of roads, war became more and more a question of mobility. Supply and Transport each of them demanded first a semi-military and then a completely military organization; and by the seventeenth century it had already been discovered in some countries that the two were really inseparable and must be placed under one head.

Such very briefly is the history of the evolution of the auxiliary department which, called by different names in different armies, has in our own Army taken since 1888 the final form of the Army Service Corps.

It would not be profitable to follow the process among mediæval armies, though one or two points

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may be noticed. One is the curious fact that, in the days before the Reformation, the Lenten fast was not remitted to fighting men, and that in 1429 the British actually fought a little action, still remembered as the battle of the Herrings, to bring a convoy of salt fish to the force besieging Orleans. It was, therefore, an important military advantage if, as occasionally happened, a general could prevail with a papal legate to grant his army a dispensation from the observance of the Lenten fast. More important is the certainty that the mercenary bands of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, upon which our own and most European regiments were modelled, depended for their subsistence in the main upon private adventurers, who followed them for profit's sake. These adventurers were in England known as sutlers, and their history belongs rather to that of Canteens than of the Army Service Corps; but it must be mentioned that they were under military control, being subject to the provost marshal, whose double function it was to enforce discipline throughout the mercenary band, and to fix the prices to be paid by the soldier for supplies.

THE NEW MODEL ARMY OF 1645.

Our present Army dates from the New Model Army of 1645, the force which was called into being to insure the defeat of the Royalists by the adherents of the Parliament, and which in the strong hands of Cromwell became the terror of Europe. Many of its best officers (Cromwell

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excepted) had been trained in the schools of Holland, Sweden or Germany, in whose armies Transport and Supply were entrusted to a single head, the "General-Proviant-Master," whose chief subordinates were the Quarter-master and the Waggon Master. In the New Model the organization, as shall now be seen, was much more complicated.

There were :

- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| (a) eight Treasurers at War .. | } | <i>Military chest.</i> |
| (b) one Commissary of Victuals | | |
| (c) one Commissary of Horse-Provisions | } | <i>Supply.</i> |
| (d) one Waggon-Master General. | | <i>Transport.</i> |
| (e) one Commissary of the Draught Horse | } | <i>"The Train of Artillery."</i> |
| (f) one Commissary of Ammunition | | |

There seems here to be a multiplication of functions, which must be explained.

- (a) The Treasurers at War, whatever the funds at their disposal, were certainly expected and authorized to take for the State—or rather for the Parliament—as great a share of any plunder or prize as they could lay hold of, for the general expense of the war. Since all soldiers then and for a century and a half later looked upon plunder as a legitimate perquisite of their calling, the Treasurers, if they did their duty, were likely to provoke

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the hostility of the men. We shall presently see an instance of this.

(*b, c, d*) It will be observed that food, forage and transport were under three different heads, an arrangement which can hardly have worked smoothly. The campaign of 1645 did not last long; but even so the army depended greatly for its subsistence upon sutlers, who followed it upon speculation. Bread and cheese were the victuals provided, though no doubt sutlers had also meat for sale. When the operations ended, the troops from 1645 to 1649 were quartered upon the inhabitants for lodging and subsistence, a proportion of their pay being deducted for the cost of the same.

(*e, f*) Until 1794 the Artillery depended upon hired horses and drivers for its teams, which explains the Commissary of the Draught Horse. The Commissary of Ammunition is now represented by an officer of the Army Ordnance Corps. But ammunition was a very different thing in those days and in these. Artillery took the field with their powder in barrels, which were placed near the guns when they came into action, and were covered up with a sheepskin when the guns were fired. This peril of open powder-barrels also caused the artillery to have its own special infantry-escort of flint-lock muskets, since the flying sparks of the match-lock (with which the rest of the infantry

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was armed) might have exploded the whole of the ammunition. Thus the "train" included two battalions of infantry, the reserve of the ammunition and, so far as can be gathered, sundry other things. In fact the "train" seems to have signified vaguely any vehicle that was moved by *draught*, and also pack-animals. Practicable roads, it must be remembered, were few in those days. Macadam is only just a century old. Till the end of the eighteenth century the pack-horse, or "crock," was the commonest means of transport, as many of our existing roads very clearly testify.

THE CAMPAIGNS IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.

The most scientific campaign of this time was that of George Monck, later Duke of Albemarle, in the Highlands. His task was to subdue what were practically tribes of savages in a widish tract of barren country. The line of his advance was roughly from south to north, so he formed a chain of magazines along the eastern boundary of his sphere, which were so many independent bases of supply. Thus, with a train of pack-horses, he started from one of these bases with provisions enough to carry him to his next line of supply, where he replenished, and thus was able continually to press the pursuit of his wary and elusive enemy, destroy his provision-grounds, and so reduce him to subjection. Monck was far ahead of his time as a

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military administrator, but the operations were too small in scale and too little known to serve as an example to others.

We must now pass to a more important and significant matter, which has received too little attention. Cromwell, for the sake of discipline, was always very firm in repressing plunder and, in fact, inspired a moral tone among his soldiers which has never been exceeded in any army. In Ireland he could say truthfully that he, paying honestly for everything that he took, was better supplied than his royalist enemies. Yet his army failed him once. The sack and massacre of Drogheda he permitted as a measure of intimidation, to terrorize the Irish and render further bloodshed unnecessary. As such it was certainly successful. Before Waterford he had made all preparations for accepting peaceful surrender of the city and sweeping the profits of any captures into the coffers of the State. But his men, suspecting something of the kind, stormed and sacked the city without orders, having no idea of abandoning good plunder, for which they had undergone hardship and risked their lives, to a pack of civilians in London. This spirit of enmity in the soldier towards the civilian who holds the purse-strings is a curious complication in the financial history of British armies in the field, and one that directly concerns our subject.

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THE EXPEDITIONS TO ST. DOMINGO.

A curious instance of it occurred very soon after Cromwell became supreme ruler in England. The country was financially exhausted by the Civil War, so, as an act of sheer robbery, he sent, at the end of 1654, an expedition to plunder the Spanish island of St. Domingo. There were, of course, a naval commander and a military commander, and there were also three commissioners in charge of the finance. On approaching St. Domingo the admiral and general wished to run in at once and take the city by surprise. The chief commissioner objected, because in that case the soldiers would pillage the place, whereas he wanted all spoil for the English treasury. An order was accordingly promulgated forbidding all plunder, and the result was something very like a mutiny among the troops. They had taken service in the expectation (as one of their colonels scornfully said) of finding the shore covered with gold "ready told up in bags." All the heart was taken out of them; and the enterprise failed with disgrace.

Another example of the same trouble occurred in 1695. William III likewise sent an expedition against St. Domingo. There were, as before, a naval commander, a military commander and, in lieu of commissioners, a single Commissary appointed by the Treasury. To him were committed the military chest, the ordnance stores (to save the expense of a Commissary of ordnance), the victuals

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and the medicines—so many important charges, indeed, that it was in his power, if he wished, to wreck all military operations. This, in the case at present before us, he actually did. He came to an agreement with the commodore to exclude the general from all share in prize-money or plunder ; and the commodore, having put the general ashore at Madeira, tried his hardest to leave him behind there. This design having miscarried, the expedition proceeded on its way, and the Commissary, by refusing to land guns, stores and supplies, effectually brought the general's plans to naught. On the other hand in a previous expedition of 1693 the general and the commodore combined against the Commissary and put him out of action by keeping him in a small vessel by himself under the custody of a sergeant's guard.

WILLIAM III's MAJOR CAMPAIGNS.

THESE minor enterprises of King William III have been considered first because of their affinity to Cromwell's adventure in the West Indies. It now remains to consider William's more important campaigns in Ireland and in the Low Countries, where the Commissary's power, under the immediate eye of the King, was far less than across the sea. The Commissary employed in Ireland, Shales by name, was a man of some experience, for he had been Purveyor to James II's camp at Hounslow. Shales duly accumulated supplies—bad in quality, but still supplies—at the base, Belfast. He also purchased

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a number of horses in Cheshire, but instead of transporting them to Ireland, let them out to the Cheshire farmers for the harvest, and pocketed their hire. The result was that the troops, who were entrenched at Dundalk, perished by hundreds of starvation, while the artillery remained immovable for want of teams. There was no hospital, this also being the business of the Commissary, and the sick died by hundreds for want of the commonest medical remedies. Yet it was not Shales but the Treasurer of the Army, William Harbord, who was chiefly to blame, for he would supply no money for any purpose, not even for the payment of the officers' and soldiers' wages. On the other hand he gave himself full pay for his own troop of horse, as if it were complete, though in reality it consisted of himself, two clerks, and a standard which he kept in his bedroom. William was too busy to take the field himself in Ireland in the year 1689, and Harbord, being a member of Parliament, defied William's commander-in-chief, Schomberg, and even had the effrontery to order him to march against the enemy.

This Irish campaign marks the climax of the Treasury's assertion of control over military operations. Too much must not be made of it. The whole country was absolutely demoralized by the Revolution of 1688, which, however it may be exalted by factious writers, was a very mean and dirty affair. No man quite knew where he stood. Every one was striving to make his own position safe and to accumulate wealth against a possible

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reverse of fortune while he could. Most men did their best to stand well with both parties. In short poor human nature, as is inevitable and as is the rule at such times, revealed itself at its lowest and basest.

Another fact must be borne in mind and never put out of sight until we reach the second or third decade of the nineteenth century. Until the system of credit, which we now take as a matter of course in our daily and hourly use of cheques, was fully developed, salaries were very irregularly paid. In the seventeenth century holders of salaries petitioned for them every quarter, and were lucky if they got them, luckier still if they obtained them in full. The result was that to every office there were attached fees, licit or illicit, which were their only certain source of income. A governor of a colony, for instance, on reaching his government, at once issued a new commission of the peace, and took a fee of two guineas from every justice. The very soldier paid a fee, politely called a stoppage, for the privilege of receiving his wages. Hence, places which gave the holder the handling of large sums of money were eagerly sought after. The Paymaster General, who received the pay of the Army in advance, generally made a large fortune. It would be unjust to be censorious towards Commissaries if they too yielded to temptation.

For his subsequent campaigns in Ireland William wisely studied the ways of Cromwell. The system of transport and supply was improved, and thus the work was done. It is not worth while to give further time to them.

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CAMPAIGNS IN FLANDERS. WILLIAM III AND MARLBOROUGH.

FLANDERS has always been a cockpit, the country being fertile and seamed with sluggish streams convenient for water-carriage. In the seventeenth century the French had mapped it out like a chess-board whereon certain moves, in the stage then reached of the art of war, led inevitably to certain further moves ; and, if an army left one camping ground, pointing in a given direction, its next camping ground could be predicted with certainty. Armies did not then seek each other out and endeavour to destroy each other. They were too costly and too precious. They fought each other now and again ; but the rule prescribed by the greatest commanders was that an army could not do better than move into the enemy's country, entrench itself to the teeth and subsist comfortably at the enemy's expense. William, though a fighting man, belonged to this school. He had fought many campaigns in Flanders before he had to do with the English and, having the resources of the Dutch provinces at his disposal, no doubt adapted British methods as far as possible to Dutch. It will be more profitable to study the system of Marlborough, himself an Englishman, and moreover a soldier who despised the prevalent ideas of warfare and desired first and foremost to seek out his enemy and beat him.

The essence of Marlborough's system of transport and supply for the army in Flanders was a contract

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with Sir Solomon Medina—presumably a Jew and certainly a very able man—for supplying it with bread and bread-waggon. Cheese had dropped out of the soldier's ration, and the Commissary's duties, so far as the feeding of the men were concerned, were limited to the article of bread. The Commissary was further accountable for the supply of forage and of fuel. Of Marlborough's own actual orders on the subject the writer has failed to find any record; but those of General Wade and the Duke of Cumberland for the campaigns of 1744-1747 are fortunately to hand, and it may be assumed with tolerable certainty that their methods were a faithful copy of Marlborough's. From them it appears that for all subsistence apart from bread, the army depended upon private adventurers—sutlers—who followed it as a speculation. The British Army until very recent times was not an army at all but a collection of regiments whose commanders enjoyed wide independent powers. Sutlers, therefore, were a regimental affair. None could accompany the army unless licensed, and their numbers were limited to one grand sutler for every regiment and one petty sutler for every troop of horse and company of foot.* Forage was allowed to them for their horses, which might not exceed fourteen for a battalion of foot, twelve to a regiment of dragoons and fifteen to a regiment of horse. The major, as the regimental staff-officer,† was responsible that

* There were, as a rule, six troops to a regiment of horse and ten companies to a battalion of foot; say seventy-five men on an average to a troop and one hundred to a company.

† The adjutant was originally the Major's adjutant or assistant.

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his sutlers sold by fair weight and measure, and that their goods were sound and wholesome. It was ordered that the men should mess regularly, and that they should have "bacon or other flesh meat" twice a week, the cost being stopped from their pay. For vegetables, parties were sent out to gather roots. Commanding officers were further required to encourage butchers (who were likewise licensed) to follow the regiments with sheep and cattle "on the hoof" and to sell the men meat, so that they should not expend too much of their pay in drink.

From all this it is clear that for the victualling of the men, the army depended wholly upon contracts of one kind or another, one vast contract for bread, and innumerable petty contracts—for a sutler may be described as a contractor—for everything else. The principal huge contract was on such a scale that the commander-in-chief, by established usage, received from the contractor a percentage which gave him a fund for the purchase of secret intelligence. This detail is an example of the system already described whereby every kind of expense was met by the allowance of perquisites and fees. Forage was mostly gathered from the surrounding country, the process often leading to petty actions, and was so precious that it was most jealously distributed after every excursion and accounted for to the Commissary. Fuel, when an army was in the field, must have been managed in much the same way as the forage. It need hardly be added that dearth of forage could compel an

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army to shift its quarters as surely as dearth of food. Unless there were a convenient waterway, it was a very difficult, if not impossible, task to bring forage from a distance. To give but one out of many examples, it was entirely a question of forage that compelled George II to retreat to Dettingen where, by right, he should have sustained overwhelming disaster.

To pass now from Supply to Transport, it is certain that the teams of the bread-waggons formed the only public source of transport for the army as a whole. Marlborough constantly used the bread-waggons, or their horses, to bring up ammunition for a siege,* and sometimes to help to draw siege-guns. The teams for the field-artillery were provided by a different contract, so that the bread-waggon-teams in a general way were exempt from that duty. But one bread-waggon was allowed to each regiment as an ambulance; and in fact a bread-waggon signified no more than a horsed wheeled vehicle provided by the bread-contractor. So far as he was concerned, therefore, the waggon and its load were theoretically under one head.

On the other hand all vehicles on the march were under the control of the waggon-master, and all baggage animals likewise. Baggage was a regimental matter; and much of it, especially that of officers, must have been conveyed on pack-

* At Windsor Castle there are some papers of one of Marlborough's A.Q.M.G.'s which give some idea of the difficulties of the Staff in adjusting the competing claims for bread-waggon teams.

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animals;* but if any vehicle moved without orders from the waggon-master or strayed from its appointed place, the penalty was that its load should be plundered on the spot, even if it belonged to the commander-in-chief himself. There is in fact a record of a German Prince watching the plunder of his baggage and applauding the plunderers, so as to uphold the authority of the waggon-master. In practice, therefore, the responsibility for the waggon lay with the waggon-master and the responsibility for its load with the Commissary as the representative of the Treasury.

CAMPAIGNS IN INDIA.

IN our earlier Indian campaigns the native followers that accompanied the army outnumbered the combatants by at least five and frequently ten to one. As in Europe, supply and transport were matters of contract, conducted by a British official with native contractors. The East India Company pursued the very evil policy of paying its servants very ill and leaving them to supplement their incomes by private enterprise. Hence the post of Commissary was eagerly sought after and frequently abused. Robert Clive himself acted once as a Commissary and made a handsome profit out of it, but, while enriching himself, he was careful also to feed the troops, which was more than could be said of all Commissaries. The three presidencies

* The huge silver "pilgrim bottles" in which Marlborough carried his wine (he had to keep up a very expensive table) were doubtless designed to be loaded in pairs on a pack-horse.

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had each of them a different system, good, bad or indifferent, but all reduced themselves in practice to agreements with native contractors. These answered fairly well on the plains ; but when events compelled the British to invade Mysore, ascending the Ghauts, and to advance upon Seringapatam, the problem of subsistence became very difficult. Hyder Ali of Mysore and his son, Tippoo Sahib, made a practice of devastating the country before the invading force, destroying in particular all forage, so that the problem of bringing forward six weeks' supplies for fifteen thousand fighting men and fifty thousand followers became insoluble. Cornwallis overcame it at last by seizing Bangalore as an advanced base and throwing himself upon the native grain dealers—*banjaras*—for supply. But the final advance upon Seringapatam in 1799 was one of the most extraordinary operations ever undertaken. The fighting men numbered about forty thousand, of whom five thousand were Europeans, and the followers about two hundred thousand ; the whole moving in a hollow square with a front of three miles and a depth of seven. Within that square were one hundred and twenty-six thousand bullocks, three-fourths of them pack-animals, for the needs of the Commissariat and the *banjaras* alone ; and besides these there were more bullocks, camels, elephants, horses, asses and coolies for behoof of private individuals and private adventurers. As Tippoo Sahib made a practice of burning all forage on the expected line of advance, this huge mass had to follow a zig-zag course, like a steamer

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manœuvring to evade a submarine. However, the army eventually reached Seringapatam and stormed it ; but with the troops there was a young officer named Colonel Arthur Wellesley, saying very little but thinking a great deal, who was destined to put transport and supply upon a sounder footing.

CAMPAIGNS IN AMERICA.

THESE were among the most difficult ever undertaken by the British Army, the task of overcoming a civilized enemy in a wild country presenting obstacles unknown in savage warfare. The campaigns at first necessarily were confined for the most part to the waterways that lead to the Great Lakes from New York up the Hudson, and up the St. Lawrence from Quebec, with the complication that the navigation of the Hudson is broken by rapids which compel the carrying of boats and their loads from time to time for some distance overland. The business of transport and supply therefore reduced itself practically to contracts for the building of boats, to the organizing of carrying-parties at the rapids, and to the general organization of the flotilla—none of them small matters, though comparatively simple because boats require no forage.

There were, however, a certain number of expeditions overland, which demand some notice. The first was Braddock's unsuccessful advance through forest and wilderness upon the Ohio in 1755, and Forbes's successful march thither three years later in 1758. Braddock's force was just

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over two thousand men, and his transport consisted of waggons and pack-horses, hired with much difficulty in Pennsylvania. His objective was about a hundred miles from his advanced base as the crow flies, but, as he was obliged to move with three hundred axemen in front to clear the way, progress was inevitably very slow ; and Braddock, wishing to assure himself an easy line of retreat, made it slower still by meticulous clearing of all obstacles. In eight days he covered only thirty miles, the animals being weak from want of forage which, in the forest, was naturally of the poorest kind. He then decided to push on with half of his force only, taking with him ten guns, thirty waggons, and a sufficient number of pack-horses. On the thirty-seventh day after leaving his base he was still eight miles from his objective, when his force fell into an ambush and was annihilated. If he had reached his objective, he must inevitably have retired from it at once from want of food.

General Forbes took a different route, and resolved to establish magazines at intervals of forty miles, sending out an advanced force under Colonel Bouquet of the Sixtieth to clear a way through forest, brushwood, swamp and ravine. His transport likewise was hired—waggons and pack-horses—but, as his force was twice the strength of Braddock's and he had to fill magazines, his *impedimenta* were necessarily more than twice as many. His first advanced base was established and his second just completed, when torrents of rain undid the whole of his work. The new road became a sea

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of mud, on which advance and retreat alike were impossible, and the old difficulty of want of forage crippled the horses. The magazines were emptied faster than they could be replenished. Forbes had started at the beginning of July, and at last in desperation he pushed forward with half of his force on the 18th of November, carrying neither tents nor baggage, despite of cold and snow. It took him a week to reach his objective—the present Pittsburg—which he found evacuated by the French. There he left a garrison of two hundred men, being unable to collect provisions that would suffice a greater number for the winter, and with the remainder of the column struggled back to Pennsylvania.

A third expedition, conducted by Colonel Bouquet of the Sixtieth over the same ground in 1763 has a peculiar interest of its own. The enemy this time were not French but Indians, and the force did not exceed five hundred men. Bouquet had to collect transport and supplies for himself as best he could, and, when his work was done, he drew up a little account of his two campaigns and added at the end a table working out the exact amount of supplies and of transport for a force of given strength in an enterprise against Red Indians, giving the load of each waggon and pack-horse somewhat in the style of our mobilization tables of to-day. This, so far as the writer knows, is the very first printed table of the kind in the English language. The book—a little thin quarto printed at Philadelphia—is rare, and un-

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fortunately has in these later days risen to a fancy price.

There is nothing in the war of American Independence that calls for special notice. There were loyalists enough in America to make the usual hiring of waggons and pack-horses a reasonably simple matter, though on the Canadian side the contractors failed to produce the animals which they had promised to Burgoyne, and had a large share in bringing about the disaster of Saratoga. The writer searched the Treasury records in the hope of finding some clue to the organization of the transport in Cornwallis's army; but he discovered nothing except uninformative accounts. It is only certain that the army drew most of its provisions from England, and that one of its Commissaries, who later went with the Duke of York to Flanders, was so nervous about signing contracts there for supply as well as transport, that for some weeks the Duke's troops were half starved.

THE WAR OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND EMPIRE.

IN 1793 a small British force, attached to a number of Hanoverians and Hessians, was sent to Flanders under the Duke of York, and in the following year this force was increased to the respectable strength of thirty to forty thousand men. The army, through persistent neglect of all auxiliary departments and the wretched rate of pay given both to officers and men, was in a miserable state, and many defects were at once discovered. On that

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old familiar fighting ground, however, the Commissaries appear to have found no difficulty in finding satisfactory contractors for transport and supply. In 1794, as has been told, a corps of gunner-drivers was formed for the artillery; and in that same year, quite as a new departure, there was formed a transport-corps, which was denominated the Royal Waggoners. It consisted of five companies, each of one hundred and twenty men, one-tenth of whom were artificers. It was not a success. The men had been recruited from the scum of London, and were known from the colour of their uniform as the "Newgate Blues." Nor, according to the chief of the staff, was the title undeserved. "A greater set of scoundrels," he said, "never disgraced an army. I believe it to be true that half of them, if not taken from the hulks, have at times visited them . . . they have committed every species of villainy and treat their horses badly." Unfortunately too many of the soldiers and even of the officers of other regiments were little, if at all, better than the "Newgate Blues," so criminally foolish had been the Government's measures for recruiting the numbers of both. The campaign ended in the most disastrous retreat in the history of the Army through the depth of an arctic winter to the Ems. Hundreds of horses belonging to contractors and sutlers, and hundreds also of men were frozen to death. Yet the transport, public and private, came off better than the soldiers. On the most destructive night of the retreat there was still plenty of rum with the army, for forty soldiers

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were found, frozen stark and stiff round a rum-cask, and the general in command reported that a large "train"—a vague term, which probably means private baggage for the most part—had come in safely. On the other hand thirty-three battalions could turn out only six thousand men fit for duty. The whole story was so ugly that it was hushed up so far as possible. All discipline disappeared. Drivers, waggons, soldiers and robbers floundered on together in one disorderly mob; and it seems likely that all fought for the plunder of the provision-waggons, public and private, that they could find and that the weakest perished of starvation. We hear no more of the "Newgate Blues" after the end of this campaign. They seem to have vanished past resurrection. Their failure, however, seems to have done something to correct a fallacy cherished among English civil administrators, that any men are good enough to make a Transport Corps.

OPERATIONS OF 1795-1799.

THE petty expeditions of the succeeding years need not detain us. They were one and all futile and devoted for the most part to the West Indies where operations were rarely carried on very far from the sea, and the troops were fed with ships' provisions. Negro slaves and a certain number of mules and horses hired from the planters sufficed to bring the food to the mouth.

There was one small expedition to the Cape of Good Hope in 1795 which is instructive. The

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general in command, Sir Alured Clarke, had begged for a Commissary and for funds, knowing that, without transport or the means of obtaining it, the most trifling inland enterprise is nearly impossible. The Secretary for War, Henry Dundas, who could never be brought to understand that a soldier cannot at one and the same time act as a beast of burden and as a combatant, refused to give him either. He would not even furnish Clarke with supplies for his own force, but compelled him to fall back on the resources of the fleet. The troops landed at Simonstown, succeeded in driving the Dutch from the point at which the road to Capetown turns inland from the coast (Muizenberg), and there formed a small magazine. Every ounce of supplies and stores had to be carried up by soldiers and sailors. The soldiers, having been cooped up on board ship for weeks, were out of condition; and, as the Government had not provided food for the army, it was necessary to put both army and fleet upon short allowance. Eleven days, from the 3rd to the 14th of September, were consumed in forming this depot, and on the 14th the force advanced without a draught-animal of any description whatever. The total strength of the troops was three thousand men, of which probably five hundred were left behind to guard the depot. The enemy had only a thousand regular troops, with nine field-guns, but they could call out the Boer population, so Clarke could not say what force he might have to meet, nor how long it might take him to drive it away. Every

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man carried four days' provisions (presumably two for the advance and two for a possible retreat); the guns were dragged by volunteer seamen from the transports; and all supplies and stores were carried by soldiers and by sailors from the fleet. The Boers hovered about the column, sniping at long range, but were kept at a distance by two light companies of British; and Clarke fought his way over the six miles to Wynberg, with no more than eighteen casualties, of which one man only was killed. At Wynberg the enemy was assembled in force in a strong position, but Clarke, after a short action, manœuvred them out of it, and pursued them for two miles, when he bivouacked where he stood, his overburdened troops being unable to go further. Luckily the Boer farmers had not turned out as they ought, and on the next day the Dutch governor asked for terms. Within twenty-four hours Capetown and Cape Colony were surrendered, and all anxiety was at an end. Clarke's casualties did not exceed four killed and sixty wounded; but, if matters had gone wrong, his retreat, unless he abandoned his sick and wounded, would have been a very difficult and dangerous matter. This is the only instance known to the writer of a successful British expedition conducted by a general without money, supplies or transport.

THE CAPTURE OF MINORCA, 1798.

THERE was, however, an enterprise nearly akin to it when General Charles Stuart descended with four battalions from Lisbon upon Minorca in 1798.

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He likewise had no transport, nor even teams for his few field-guns. The enemy's strongholds were Port Mahon on the east coast and Ciudadela on the west, fifty miles apart, so he landed on the north coast midway between these two points and pushed a flying column forward to seize a strategic post on the mountains, seven or eight miles from his landing place, which severed the communication between the two. The Spaniards in alarm had withdrawn most of the garrison from Port Mahon; and the flying column cut off their rearguard, and captured the post, with some small magazines, which gave welcome supplies. Stuart joined it with the main body without delay, the men carrying their own victuals, and bluejackets dragging the guns. Hearing of the evacuation of Mahon, Stuart detached against it three hundred men, to whom the garrison—reduced to a mere handful—at once surrendered. Thus Stuart gained a safe port for his base and found moreover in Mahon a certain number of animals, almost certainly pack-mules, for his land-transport. He then marched over infamous roads upon Ciudadela, where he found the enemy in superior numbers, strongly entrenched, with heavy cannon. The story of the magnificent "bluff" whereby Stuart awed them into surrender must be read elsewhere. The operations lasted just eight days, from the 7th to the 15th of November, and are a remarkable example of what may be accomplished by a resolute commander who understands his business. Stuart had intimate knowledge of every detail of his profession, including transport and supply.

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THE NORTH HOLLAND EXPEDITION OF 1799.

It was possibly with some recollection of this enterprise that the Government, having remade the Army by means of drafts from the militia, resolved to send, in 1799, a strong expedition to North Holland under Sir Ralph Abercromby. What precisely they wished Abercromby to do, they were not very clear, though they anticipated that he would want siege-artillery and were willing to provide a number of guns ; but what they would not see was that he would need horses to draw these guns and for other purposes also. "We want the means of conveyance for artillery, sick, baggage and provisions," wrote Abercromby, "and you know we have not a foot on the Continent until we acquire it. I hope it is not a crime to state these facts ;" and again, "It is self-evident that an army is not a machine that can move of itself ; it must have the means of moving. . . . As our numbers increase, so must our arrangements ; and rest assured that an army cannot move without horses and waggons." Nothing could persuade Ministers of this simple fact. They had been accustomed to see operations in the Low Countries conduct themselves, so to speak, by means of contractors, and they presumed that North Holland was very like Belgium. If it were different, the difference lay in the multitude of canals, which would in their opinion greatly facilitate transport, for Abercromby would be sure to find boats somewhere. They overlooked the

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fact that former expeditions landing in Holland had found it a friendly country, but that it was now hostile, and that Abercromby would have in the first instance to force a landing. In a general way it was impossible to send horses any great distance oversea in those days of sailing ships. One regiment which carried its own horses to America in 1775 lost more than half of them on the voyage ; but to ship horses to Holland was not a difficult nor hazardous matter. However, the Government ended by sending Abercromby off in command of ten thousand men without transport, and with orders to land somewhere in Holland and do something.

Abercromby forced a landing successfully on the Dutch coast, a little to south of the great naval port of Helder ; and by great good luck gained Helder itself next day, the enemy evacuating it without firing a shot. But for this stroke of fortune the first gale of wind might have blown the ships off the coast and left him stranded without any reserve of food or ammunition. As things were, he had gained a base, but no means of moving. He was obliged to take up a defensive position just outside Helder, and only with the greatest difficulty was he able to feed his troops there owing to want of transport to carry provisions from Helder. After a few days he found a few horses and waggons, which made things more comfortable ; but meanwhile he had been reinforced by five thousand more men, making fifteen thousand in all, and the Government had sent him no more than thirty-five four-

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horsed bread-waggon. Water-carriage had proved a delusion. There was no doubt plenty of canals, but they were, so to speak, of different gauges. Some big barges captured at Helder would not enter the narrower canals about Abercromby's position further to south; and the enemy had been careful to destroy all smaller craft. However, Abercromby continued to hold his position successfully until further reinforcements made up the army to fifty thousand men, three-fourths of them British, under the Duke of York.

The full allowance of land-transport supplied by the Government for this force was one hundred bread-waggon, as many forage carts, twenty hospital-waggon and ten forge carts. Of these not more than half were on the spot, the rest being in England and possibly in course of construction. Fuel was wanting; and pending the arrival of coal from England, it was necessary to break up the Dutch ships captured at Helder for the purpose. Again the Treasury had made a hopeless muddle of supplying bread for the army. Even while Abercromby had still only fifteen thousand men, it was suddenly discovered that there was less than a week's bread in store; and Abercromby's Commissary-General could think of no remedy except to write a long letter to Abercromby, explaining in detail why the army must starve. In every department there was confusion and helplessness; and the climax of disaster to the supply department was reached when not a single sutler presented himself, and the soldiers were consequently left without a

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drop of spirits. The detail is interesting, for it shows how great was still the dependence of a British army in the field upon private adventure.

All this boded ill for the Duke of York's campaign which, as a matter of fact, went to utter wreck. So long as his operations were confined to the well-canalized districts the army had been with great difficulty fed ; though it had been impossible, at best, to keep with it two days' store of victuals in hand. When he advanced beyond it—which his mission compelled him to do—he was stopped at once by want of wheeled transport. Torrents of rain added to his difficulties by ruining the roads ; and, when he began his retreat to the lines which he had fortified to south of Helder, his few waggons took two days to traverse nine miles. When he arrived within them he found that there were only nine days' provisions in hand. The Commissary-General had sent ships a month before to Bremen and Hamburg for flour, but, owing to foul winds or other causes, not one had returned. Abercromby had forced his first landing on the 27th of August ; his first reinforcement of five thousand men had joined him on the 28th ; the united army under the Duke of York had assembled in the first ten days of September ; but not until then, apparently, did it occur to the Commissary-General that it would be wise to have more than a month's supplies in hand. It was on the 8th of October that he announced that he had but nine days' victuals left. Happily the French were as anxious to see the last of the Duke in North Holland as he

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was to see the last of them ; and they allowed him to re-embark under capitulation without further trouble. Later inquiry showed that the Commissariat, when calculating the amount of supplies necessary for the army, had omitted to make allowance for retaining a month's provisions upon all the transports in case of re-embarkation. If a month's supply sounds a good deal for a voyage between England and Holland, it may be mentioned that, owing to foul weather, Abercromby lay about the Dutch coast for a full fortnight before he could venture to disembark ; and abundant evidence could be adduced to show that this precaution was by no means unnecessary. The expedition actually did not return to England without the loss of one transport and three men-of-war wrecked, all save one with loss of all hands, on the Dutch coast.

Nevertheless this grossly ill-managed and abortive enterprise is interesting for the rebirth of the Royal Waggon-Train. Not much time was allowed for its training, for it was formed on the 12th of August and sent on active service within a month. It was, however, composed of soldiers, cavalry soldiers who were nearly worn out "or did not match their regiments"—a vague phrase which was not improbably construed by colonels as men whom they would be glad to get rid of. But the cavalry soldier was then of a superior class to the infantryman, receiving higher pay, and above all he had been taught to look after his horse. The Waggon-Train accordingly was organized on the

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basis of cavalry. It consisted of five troops each of four officers, who bore combatant rank, and seventy-one men of whom sixty were drivers; and the whole was under the command of a waggon-master-general. All ranks received the pay of cavalry. Within five weeks of its birth it was augmented, while in Holland, by three more troops of the same composition; but a return of its strength on the eve of its departure from Holland shows no more than twenty-five officers, two hundred and seventy-five men of other ranks and five hundred and fourteen horses. The corps, therefore, was evidently sent over when incomplete, for the original five troops should have numbered three hundred and seventy-five non-commissioned officers and men, and, allowing two horses to every driver, six hundred horses; and, whatever the casualties among the horses, there would hardly have been a hundred among the men. The Duke of York reported at the close of the campaign that the Waggon-Train had been inadequate to the wants of his army. He had just about thirty-six thousand British soldiers. A century later the Mobilization Tables for an Army Corps of just that strength was five hundred and fourteen *four-horsed vehicles*, besides pair-horse and six-horse carriages and pack animals. With no more than five hundred and fourteen horses, it is hardly surprising that the Waggon-Train was inadequate. However, it had come into being and was destined to last for a generation.

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THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN OF 1801.

THE Waggon-Train, however, was not used in the next important campaign, that in Egypt, for the troops to be employed there were already in the Mediterranean. For so distant a theatre of war it was absolutely impossible to provide land-transport, but this did not deter the Government from ordering Abercromby to undertake operations there. Indeed they took it for granted that, until access to the Nile were gained by the capture of Alexandria, sixteen thousand soldiers would depend for fresh water upon such quantities as could be carried on the ships and landed on the backs of blue-jackets. It did not occur to them that, if the fleet were driven off the coast by a gale, the army might die of thirst.

Abercromby forced a landing at Aboukir on the 8th of March, and to his great relief found fresh water by digging near the roots of palm-trees. On the 9th and 10th the wind blew so hard that it was impossible to land supplies and stores, but on the 11th these were got ashore and on the 12th Abercromby was able to advance, using the salt Lake Maadieh on his inland flank as a means of water-transport. His sixteen guns, having no teams, were dragged through the heavy sand by men. As is well known he defeated the French but fell in the decisive action; and his successor, having with difficulty collected animals to draw his guns and ammunition waggons, finished the campaign by an advance up the Nile, using the river for water-

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transport. He was joined then by a contingent of about five thousand men from India which had landed at Cosseir and marched a hundred miles across the desert to the Nile at Keneh. The transport for this force consisted of camels hired or purchased in and about Cosseir.

CHANGES IN THE CONDITION OF THE ARMY AT HOME.

UNTIL the very end of the eighteenth century the Army in Great Britain had no barracks except in the Tower of London and two or three more fortresses. The men were billeted in ale-houses, whose landlords were required to provide them with food, fuel and candle at a tariff fixed by the annual Mutiny Act. In Ireland, on the contrary, barracks had been found necessary a century earlier, and the Commissaries had the duty of supplying them with food. This was done, of course, by contract; but there was a small Waggon-Train in Ireland which seems to have been found necessary for some purpose of supply in time of peace. In Great Britain also the Commissaries now learned at least so much experience as could be gained by contracting for the subsistence of the soldier at home. But the Waggon-Train was not, so far as can be gathered, employed for this service; and, in any case, the feeding of soldiers in barracks was practically valueless as instruction for fulfilling the same service in the field. The Treasury could never see that Transport and Supply might be more than a mere matter of finance.

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COLONEL WELLESLEY AND THE MAHRATTA WAR, 1803-1804.

MILITARY officers, however, thought differently. After the capture of Mysore Colonel Arthur Wellesley was left to govern the conquered territory and found himself saddled with every kind of administrative duty, from the making of roads and bridges to devising remedies against debased coinage, to say nothing of occasional little campaigns for the subjection of rebellious rajahs and for the hunting down of gangs of banditti. These latter expeditions drew his attention to the bullocks of Mysore, which can trot six miles an hour, a very different animal to the weak, crawling bullocks of the Carnatic which had filled the hollow square on the march to Seringapatam. He endeavoured to induce the Madras Government to maintain an establishment of draft-bullocks with disciplined bullock-drivers, but he strove in vain; and the result was that his campaigns against banditti were, to his great chagrin and annoyance, unduly protracted and far more expensive than they should have been. But the Madras administration was rotten. It needed from eight to ten different departments to provide five thousand men with transport; so naturally they objected to keeping an establishment of transport-bullocks.

When, however, Wellesley was appointed to the command of the army that was to operate against the Mahrattas in the south, he took matters into his own hands. He knew the strength of the

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Mahrattas—that they moved swiftly, possessed a mighty force of artillery and had a perfect genius for selecting strong defensive positions. But he knew also their weakness—that they lived upon the country. He made up his mind that he would move as swiftly as they, cut down the followers of his army to the lowest possible figure and organize perfectly his service of transport and supply. Then he would move after them and, if they took up a strong position and waited for him, then he would wait too.

His supply and transport service would enable him to outstay them, for he could feed his army in any given place for an indefinite time, whereas they, living on the country, were bound to move as soon as they had exhausted the district around them. As soon as they moved, he would attack them on the march ; and, if they slipped away, he was sure to overtake them, for a flooded river would stop them, whereas he, having carefully prepared a pontoon-train, could cross any water. His greatest difficulty was to ensure that his bullock-drivers should feel a pride in their beasts and take care that they were properly fed ; but this he overcame, if not by personal supervision, then by personal influence. Moreover, from giving this special attention to his draught-cattle in India he learned to be the best horse-master that ever commanded a British army.* His campaign was not carried out exactly as he designed, for he did attack the

* See his general orders for inuring British horses gradually to Portuguese forage in the Peninsula.

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Mahrattas in a position of their own choosing at Assaye, but in every other detail he fulfilled his intentions. He moved his army more rapidly than any commander in India before him, yet always had his cattle in good condition. In fact he revolutionized the conduct of Indian campaigns because he gave the very best of his attention to transport and supply; and his experience in India was of priceless value to him later.

THE MINOR CAMPAIGNS 1803-1807.

THERE is little that calls for notice in these with the possible exception of the insane expedition to Buenos Ayres in 1807. At such a vast distance* it was inevitable that a force must depend for transport upon what it could find on the spot; and this on the Rio de la Plata happened not to be much—practically wild horses and not many of them. The force, six thousand men, was not a large one, and the distance from the landing place to the objective—between forty and fifty miles—was not, on paper, very great. But the ground was swampy and difficult, and moreover very little was known about it. The great trouble, however, was that the commander-in-chief, General Whitelocke, understood nothing whatever about transport and supply, and exasperated his Commissaries by giving them no due notice of his requirements and by changing plans at the last moment. There was thus much friction between the two parties, and Whitelocke

* One regiment on the return voyage from Buenos Ayres was one hundred and eighty days at sea before it reached England.

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complained to his second-in-command, Sir Samuel Auchmuty, that his Commissaries were useless and that he had to do the work of commissary and store-keeper himself, as well as of General. "Sir," answered Auchmuty, a wise and sound old soldier, "if a general does not himself attend to the supply of his troops, they will often want provisions." The general result was that the troops were unnecessarily harassed, starved and exhausted during their six days' march (29 June-4 July), upon Buenos Ayres, which was a bad preparation for the task before them. Whether the Commissaries knew their business or not,* Whitelocke gave them no chance. The enterprise, as is well known, ended disastrously, which was fortunate, for it put an end to more mad adventures upon the same Continent.

THE PENINSULAR WAR OF 1808-1814.

WE come now to the most interesting of all our campaigns, that in the Iberian Peninsula. We are so familiar with the name that we hardly realize that in those days it was something of a new departure. It is true that the theatre of war was not quite strange to us. Setting the Black Prince aside, we sent a small force there during the war of the Spanish Succession while Marlborough was fighting in Flanders. We also dispatched seven thousand men to Portugal in 1762, and a still weaker detachment to Lisbon under Charles Stuart in 1797.

* As a matter of fact I think that they did. John Bissett, already a very efficient man of wide experience, was one of them.

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Nevertheless the fact remained that the British Army had never fought within Europe in any strength except in the Low Countries. The campaign of Blenheim in 1704 was an extraordinary event, and the British contingent formed but a small fraction of Marlborough's Army.* The campaign of Dettingen in 1743 was a Hanoverian rather than a British affair. In both cases the scene of action reverted immediately to Flanders. It is true that a force of twenty-five thousand men was sent in 1805 to the Weser, but it was recalled almost as soon as landed. The expedition to Copenhagen in 1807 was only a raid. Broadly speaking it may be said that the British had no experience of war on a large scale except in the Low Countries, that blood-stained cockpit, where everyone was so familiar with war that they were ready and able to carry on every part of it, actual fighting excepted, for anyone who could produce sufficient money.

One attribute alone the Iberian Peninsula shared with Flanders. It was a friendly country. The British wars in Europe have almost invariably begun in a friendly country ; and to this must be attributed in part the severity of all great English commanders, from Cromwell onward, against plunderers. But if plundering were to be kept down and discipline were to be maintained, the troops must be regularly fed, and this was no easy matter in a country where,

* The foresight with which Marlborough prepared his magazines and reserve-stores of such articles as shoes for the Blenheim campaign was one of its most remarkable features.

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as the proverb ran, small armies were beaten and large armies were starved.

Wellesley began his landing on an open beach at the mouth of the Mondego on the Portuguese coast on the 1st of August, 1808. He brought with him nine thousand troops, including a regiment of cavalry and eighteen guns, fewer than six hundred horses,* and forty-three vehicles of all kinds, including eighteen gun-carriages, as many ammunition waggons, three forge-carts and four transport-waggons. He would not even have had teams for his guns if he had not insisted on taking the drivers and horses of the Irish waggon-train; and it is significant of the difficulty of transporting animals by sea in those days that this small number of horses, together with a thousand dragoons and gunners, filled twenty-one vessels. He was presently joined by five thousand more men under General Spencer who, being kept in copper-bottomed transports in readiness to sail to any part of the world, had naturally no animals with them.

Immediately upon landing he set about looking for transport, and drew up with his own hand a table of the numbers, loads and organization of the pack-mules and ox-waggons. In ten days he had collected sufficient carriage to convey thirteen days' supplies, mules enough for his reserve-ammunition, and horses enough to mount sixty dragoons; but he had exhausted all the surrounding district

* Of the horses thirty-four were for the General and staff; three hundred and six for the artillery, and two hundred and twenty-four for the cavalry; total, five hundred and sixty-four.

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before he could provide teams for Spencer's guns. His objective, Lisbon, was, roughly speaking, one hundred and twenty miles distant, and he took the coast-road so as to maintain touch with his ships and supplies at sea. He could not count upon finding any great store of provisions on the march ; but he renewed his native carts as he went on, sending back those that he had originally taken as soon as he could replace them by others drawn from the villages through which he passed. At the battle of Vimeiro he had four hundred bullock-carts and from four to five hundred pack-mules, many of which vanished during the action ; for, being misinformed as to the enemy's numbers and hence never dreaming that they would dare to attack him, he had allowed the transport to be parked in too exposed a situation. Naturally the native drivers hurried their carts to the rear with all speed ; and this was one reason why Sir Harry Burrard, who took over the command when the victory was won, declined to follow it up and continue the advance. This mistake in the disposition of the transport was, therefore, one cause of the much abused Convention of Cintra.

SIR JOHN MOORE'S CAMPAIGN, 1808-1809.

AFTER Wellesley's return to England Sir John Moore assumed command of the Army in Portugal—about twenty-five thousand men—with orders to join another force of fifteen thousand men under Sir David Baird, which was to land at Coruña,

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and to help the Spaniards to drive the French from Spain. This signified a march of at least three hundred miles, with a campaign to follow, demanding very careful preparations for transport and supply. But waggons and mules alike were almost unprocurable in Portugal. The carts collected by Wellesley had, as has been told, been sent back to their villages as soon as, in the course of his march, he could relieve them with those from other villages. Moreover, Moore's Commissaries, though zealous, were absolutely without experience except in the concluding of contracts. The chief of them was an honourable man, of real value in a London office, but useless in the field, while his assistants lacked both character and ability. Moore warned the Secretary for War that for the higher places in the Commissariat he must seek out capable business men from London, since he would never find them in the Treasury. However, a Spanish Commissary appeared at Lisbon with rather doubtful promises that his Government would look to the subsistence of the British; and, since time was pressing, Moore resolved to march at any rate, and to fit himself out with transport as he advanced. His embarrassments were increased by lack of money, specie being very scarce in England; and bills on the British treasury proved not to be negotiable in Lisbon. Still he thought it his duty to take all risks, though he did not blind himself to them. "I am advancing," he wrote, "without the knowledge of a single magazine being made, or that we may not starve when we arrive."

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Baird, on arriving at Coruña with his infantry, was begged by the Spanish local government to sail away and land elsewhere. A Spanish army had been making large demands for supplies and transport, and few horses or mules were obtainable. Eventually he was allowed to land, but he was in Coruña ten days before he could obtain an ounce of bread for his men. Forage was unprocurable, and the artillery-horses which he had brought with him suffered much in consequence. All efforts to obtain draught-animals in Galicia resulted in the production of four or five mules only. In the circumstances Baird began to push his troops inland by small detachments, making contracts for a regular supply of provisions to them. A fortnight later than the infantry arrived his cavalry, with three thousand horses, and three troops of the Waggon-Train—two hundred and fifty-two rank and file and one hundred and sixty-four horses—with a promise of three months' forage to follow immediately. Half a million dollars in specie arrived at the same time. It was found that transport-mules could be hired in the neighbouring province of Asturias, and Baird's prospects began to grow brighter.

At best, however, the arrangements both of Moore and of Baird for transport and supply could amount only to makeshifts, and the Spanish promises to Moore proved to be fallacious. The campaign, which was to have driven the French from Spain, resolved itself, for the British, into a rapid raid and a hasty retreat ; and only eighty days elapsed between Moore's departure from Lisbon and the

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re-embarkation of the army at Coruña. In all the circumstances things might have gone far worse. The roads, generally, were so bad that no artillery-carriage of any description could be moved without a team of six horses; and, even before the retreat, the artillery's ammunition-waggon were drawn, owing to the wear and tear of beasts, by a motley collection of horses, mules and oxen. When the retreat began, in terrible weather, the transport naturally dwindled through breakdowns, through the desertion of the native drivers with their teams, and through the driving off of all cattle by the peasants as the enemy approached. Dearth of animals again had hindered the completion of the magazines upon the line of retreat, and at one moment Moore had less than two days' supply of bread to carry his army over a distance of fifty miles. But, on the whole, troops have often fared worse, and their indiscipline in plundering waggons and refusing to wait for the distribution of food and fuel caused far more distress than any failings of the Commissariat. The experience of the campaign, however, gave little help towards solving future problems of transport and supply.

THE WALCHEREN EXPEDITION, 1809.

THE army of forty thousand men embarked upon this venture was throughout in close touch with the fleet; and the epidemic sickness* which wrecked

* The deaths from sickness were about four thousand. Of thirty-five thousand who re-embarked for England, eleven thousand were on the sick list.

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the enterprise was ascribed by the physicians in great measure to the exceedingly salt meat and hard indigestible biscuit which was served out to the men, causing them to drink any unwholesome water that they could find, and to resort to spirits whenever they could get them. The land-transport was drawn from the country, and, as the army did not move very far, the surrounding district was soon exhausted. "We have not only drained the people of cattle," wrote the Commissaries, "but have often taken their cows, which were of greater value to them for the support of their families than can be made good by the highest price paid for beef. We have also taken all their horses, waggons and drivers without further remuneration than their rations, and this at harvest time." In these circumstances it is not surprising that the inhabitants drove away their cattle whenever they had the chance, and that the army very soon had to do without fresh meat. The whole proceeding was due to the Treasury in London, which forbade any higher price to be paid to the inhabitants for any article than had obtained before the disembarkation of the army. The Treasury further expected all expenses to be defrayed by bills on London and declined to furnish the Commander-in-Chief with sufficient specie, causing the greatest embarrassment and confusion. In this instance such a policy was particularly inept, for the Government was always expecting the Dutch to rise and throw off the yoke of Napoleon; and such meanness was not likely

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to endear the English to them. But the Treasury never had the slightest idea that operations in the field require greater elasticity than is to be found in a Government office.

WELLINGTON'S CAMPAIGN OF 1809.

THE equipment of Moore's force with transport, however hasty and imperfect, had evil consequences in Portugal. Most of the animals and waggons that he had taken had not been paid for, and the officer, Sir John Cradock, who remained in command of the troops left in and about Lisbon—some seventeen thousand men*—could not obtain horses and mules enough for his artillery alone, to say nothing of the transport. After all, the French, Wellesley and Moore had all taken toll of the resources of southern Portugal, so it was hardly surprising that there should have been a dearth of carriage; while, even if the animals had been forthcoming, forage was very scarce. In despair Cradock wrote to England that artillery-horses must be sent out from home, and meanwhile he despatched officers to the Barbary coast to see if mules and horses could be procured there.

Such was the position when Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived for the second time in Portugal in April, 1809. There were then two French Armies threatening Lisbon, one under Soult in his front (i.e., to north) occupying Oporto and the richest province in Portugal, the other under Victor on

* The numbers had been swelled by from five thousand to six thousand stragglers of Moore's army who had found their way to Lisbon.

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his right flank (i.e., to east). But they were two hundred miles apart and not in communication with each other, so he resolved to deal with them in detail, and first with Soult. Unable to procure many mules or horses, he fell back unwillingly on the Portuguese ox-waggon, rigid vehicles built entirely of wood, whose axles revolved with the wheels, and which were therefore awkward and difficult to turn round.* There were none too many even of these, and the men started on the march northward each carrying three days' bread. Wellesley's force numbered about twenty-five thousand British and fifteen thousand Portuguese; and the first campaign, whereby he drove Soult from Portugal, lasted fourteen days, being ended by his sheer inability to feed his men any longer in the bleak and barren country to which he had chased his enemy. They were on short rations of bread before the pursuit was abandoned, and were falling down fast from exhaustion and sickness. However, the general result was successful; though Wellesley was not well pleased with the Commissariat. "Our Commissariat is very bad indeed," he wrote at this time; "but it is new and will improve, I hope." How it could have been other than very bad indeed, considering that its members had been trained only to make contracts and keep accounts, it is difficult to see. Meanwhile the waggons of the waggon-train had been found too broad for the Portuguese roads, so Wellesley

* They were just the same twenty-five years ago, and I have no doubt are the same to this day.

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handed their horses over for the present to the cavalry and artillery. It may be as well to say here once for all that the vehicles of the waggon-train, being spring-waggons, were used wholly for ambulance work, when they could find roads to travel on.

The advance against the enemy on his right flank, which is known as the campaign of Talavera, broke down wholly from want of transport, for which he had depended in great measure upon the Spaniards, and Wellesley returned to Portugal a wiser man. We must henceforth speak of him as Wellington.

THE BUILDING UP OF THE TRANSPORT AND SUPPLY SERVICE IN THE PENINSULA.

It was now that Wellington bent himself to the vital task of building up an efficient transport and supply service—vital, because his success or failure depended wholly upon it. The French, like the Mahrattas, lived on the country, and could only be driven from Spain by observing the same principles as had served him so well in India. But the system pursued by the Treasury in former great wars could not be followed in the Peninsula. Supply and transport could not be carried on there as in the Low Countries, by the simple process of signing a contract ; for there were no contractors to undertake it. For the first time in British military history the Commissariat had to do the whole business for itself. It could indeed hire animals, but the rest of the work it must do for itself ; and, since it had never been taught to do this, it had to

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learn under the tuition of Wellington and the discipline of hard experience.

One great initial difficulty was the dearth of specie. The exchange against England all over the Mediterranean varied, roughly, from twenty to fifty per cent. There were different rates at Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar and Malta; and at all of these stations there were different officers competing for a small supply. Once, when Wellington was in urgent need of coin, a brother general in the Mediterranean outbid him by paying 6s. 3d. for the 4s. 2d. dollar. At last in 1812 Wellington sent a Commissary-General to Gibraltar to arrange for a uniform rate of exchange for all British demands, whereby the situation was greatly eased. But one would have thought that the Treasury should have seen to this much earlier in the day.

Another trouble was that the Treasury could not understand the new system, being unable to conceive of the Commissariat's functions apart from the supervising of contracts, and therefore was slow to send out enough men for its staff. As late as at the beginning of 1812 the Commissary-General was obliged to write home a pathetic letter to explain to the Treasury that his business was to manage the whole of the transport and supply of the army, in detail, and not merely to pay cheques to contractors, and that by so doing he saved the profits which had hitherto been made by contractors; but that he *must* have more men. So little did the Treasury realize the change, that it actually expected the Commissary-General,

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in addition to the arduous duty of feeding the army in the field, to deal with the whole business of accountancy. It could not grasp the fact that the question was no longer one of passing a few large contractors' accounts; and it was only after the Commissary had sent home a map, showing the position of his thirty-seven principal depots, and seconded this by a journey to London and a personal explanation, that at last a little light began to dawn upon the Treasury. The good people in the office—and for that matter Ministers also—imagined that an army always remained as a single compact body. They recognized that a magazine for such a body was a necessity; but why should a magazine require more than one Commissariat officer in charge of it? He could as easily issue supplies to five thousand men as to five hundred. Against such elementary imbecilities the Commissariat at the front had to fight for the best part of two years. Meanwhile, overworked and undermanned, they had to press into the service anyone that they could get hold of—Portuguese as well as British—with the inevitable consequence of fraud, malversation and an evil name for the department. When, in 1812, a good many of these obstacles had been overcome, the whole staff of the Commissariat for a force of forty thousand men little exceeded seven hundred.*

* Of these eighty-eight were commissaries of various rank, two hundred and fifty-five clerks, seventy-eight storekeepers, fifty-seven, receivers and issuers, one hundred and fifty-four conductors of stores, forty-one bakers, and the remainder coopers, bricklayers and artificers. These, as their titles denote, were mostly more concerned with supply than with transport.

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For transport Wellington resolved to depend chiefly on pack-animals, and no one who has seen the old Portuguese roads will wonder why. One cart alone was allowed to each regiment to carry men who fell sick on the march. All others were strictly forbidden. Officers who engaged ox-carts for their private baggage were ordered to discard them, and to procure pack-mules or pack-horses instead. Wellington himself had one single private carriage which he very rarely used for his own purposes, but frequently lent to sick or wounded officers.

The pack-mules for the public service were hired from Spain and were driven by their own Spanish muleteers, who seem to have had their own organization in the way of conductors and sub-conductors. The rate of hire paid was a dollar a day for each mule, with rations for the men though not for the animals, each muleteer having charge of his own mules. Sometimes from want of ready money the hire was not paid—at one moment it was six months in arrear—and then the mules were supplied with forage. The final arrangement made was to give two-thirds of a dollar and a ration of eight pounds of corn for each mule. The muleteers seem to have given singularly little trouble except when they conceived that they were working for Portuguese instead of English soldiers. They held the Portuguese in such supreme contempt that, if they knew it, they would do nothing for them. As the Portuguese made up an important part of Wellington's army, this was awkward; but the difficulty seems to have been by some means evaded.

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Before going further it will be convenient to glance at the transport which, according to the complicated system of the time, was attached to the army apart from that provided by the Commissariat. What may be called the regimental transport consisted first of one mule to every company of infantry and to every troop of cavalry to carry the camp-kettles. These animals were not public but regimental property, being supplied by the regimental officers out of the fund known as "bat, baggage and forage allowance." Moore was hampered in providing his army with transport in 1808, by the fact that the Treasury had deducted income-tax from this allowance under the impression—quite unpardonable in a public office which was supposed to understand military finance—that it formed part of the officer's emoluments, instead of being a subsidy to enable the regiment to take the field.

The second item of regimental transport was five mules to every battalion and six to every regiment of cavalry to carry the paymaster's books, the regimental surgeon's chest, the armourer's tools, entrenching tools, and the equipment of the saddler and of the veterinary surgeon. These last were "public" mules supplied by the Commissariat.

This arrangement did not work very smoothly, for, if a regimental mule became useless, the regimental officers, having no funds to replace it, naturally tried to lay hands on a "public," a stolen or a captured mule, upon each and all of which the Commissary-General, under General

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Orders, possessed priority of claim. It should be added that to each regiment or battalion was allotted a sutler, who received forage for two horses or mules. The army still could not get on without private adventurers to eke out supply with little comforts and luxuries.

The soldier's daily ration at this time was one and a half pounds of bread or one pound of biscuit, one pound of meat, and a ration of wine or spirits. The number of mules, over and above those belonging to the regimental transport, above referred to, for an army of fifty-three thousand men was close upon nine thousand. But at the end of 1811, when Portugal was safe and Wellington contemplated taking the offensive, he needed something more than pack-mules, and set his Acting Commissary-General, Mr. Bissett, to design a suitable cart. These vehicles had iron axletrees and brass boxes, most of which had been captured by the French; and, the model having been chosen, the building of them began at Oporto and Almeida during the winter of 1811. They were drawn each by a pair of oxen, the animals being purchased and the drivers specially hired. The full number of these carts was fixed at eight hundred, of which some were to be constructed in England and elsewhere; and they were organized into two grand divisions of four hundred apiece. Each grand division was further organized into eight divisions of fifty each, and everyone of these lesser divisions into two brigades, consisting each of twenty-five waggons and fifty-four bullocks: two bullocks for each cart

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and four bullocks to spare. Each division was under the charge of a clerk or other subordinate officer of the Commissariat, all conductors subordinate to him being apparently natives, Spanish or Portuguese.

Further details respecting the organization of the transport the writer has never been able to discover. A friend once kindly sent to him a large packing-case full of the papers of one of Wellington's Commissaries, whose name was familiar to him, but he could find in them nothing but accounts. The Spanish muleteers must have had their own hierarchy of conductors and sub-conductors, and there is evidence in Wellington's dispatches to show that the higher among them, known by the name of *Capataz* or overseer, were men of consideration. We have some clue to the number of conductors, etc. in a plan for a train drawn up by Bissett for the little British force which was sent to Portugal in 1826. This consisted of one hundred and twenty-five one-horse (or one mule) carts, divided into five squads of twenty-five carts apiece; and to each squad was assigned a conductor, two sub-conductors and a clerk. One thing only is certain, that on the march the transport must have been under military control, and organized after a military fashion. Bissett declared, long after Waterloo, that if he had to form a waggon-train he would divest it of "all useless military equipment" and drill and clothe them as waggoners only; and he held that it might be maintained under the exclusive direction of Commissariat officers, if only a nucleus of

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corporals and waggoners, thus clothed, drilled and appointed, were established at home, ready for transfer in any emergency to the orders of the Commissary-General. But it is easy to see from his book that the heart of the Commissariat in those days lay with the Treasury rather than with the army. Three-fourths of the little volume are devoted to purely financial matters, and only a meagre fourth to transport. This was in the circumstances natural; but the value of his work is lessened by the Treasury's habit of thinking of the army in terms of figures only and not in terms of living men.

It is hardly necessary to say that Wellington's plan for worsting the French was completely successful. The most perilous year was 1810, when Napoleon could turn his full strength upon the Peninsula, and Massena invaded Portugal with sixty thousand men, abandoning his line of communications and living on the country. Wellington looked at him quietly from behind the lines of Torres Vedras, and simply waited for him to go. He knew that Massena dared not attack him and that the French must go sooner or later, or be starved. At last Massena retreated, and Wellington followed him up, with his mule-train at hand to feed his own army, taking no risks but harassing the hungry French to death. The campaign of 1810 cost Massena twenty thousand men.

So later Wellington was able to besiege and storm Ciudad Rodrigo before Marmont, whose troops were

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dispersed in order to find subsistence, could even concentrate a force to prevent him ; and he turned to constant advantage his knowledge that the French, having eaten up one district, could not approach it again until the next harvest was ripe, whereas he, with transport and supply service perfectly organized, could go where he would. There were, indeed, some defects in the supply-service during the retreat from Burgos in 1812 ; but curiously enough Wellington was hampered during this the most brilliant of his campaigns by the fact that both his chief of staff and Chief Commissary had gone home on leave. The new chief of staff was absolutely useless (he went home at the end of the year) ; and it seems to have been mainly due to his neglect to inform Bissett (who was Acting Commissary-General) of a change in the line of retreat, that the troops for a few days were irregularly fed.

When Wellington made his final advance from Portugal in 1813, he shifted his marine base from Lisbon first to Santander and later to Passargues and Bordeaux. The mule-train seems to have remained with him until he had fairly crossed the Pyrenees and entered the plains of France ; where, paying good money, he was able to obtain supplies and transport without difficulty, whereas his adversary, Soult, could get nothing. The British troops were broken of their taste for plunder, and their behaviour in France was exemplary ; with the result that the French peasants welcomed them much more warmly than their own unfortunate soldiers. By that time, moreover, the Com-

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missariat knew its business perfectly. Wellington had started with a Mr. Murray for his first Commissary-General, and described him thus: "This gentleman, like many others attached to this army, does not appear to me to be very equal to the performance of the duty which he has taken." This is the language of an official dispatch, and was probably in private conversation compressed into the two words, "d——d useless." But Murray was succeeded by Robert Kennedy, a very able man, and during Kennedy's short absence his place was taken by John Bissett, a man who had worked not only with the British Army in many parts of the world but with foreign armies on the Continent of Europe. It is to him, through a little book, written in 1832 but not published until 1846, that we owe our chief knowledge of the work of the Commissariat in the Peninsula.*

THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN.

SHORT though the time was between the end of the Peninsular War and the opening of the Waterloo campaign, it had been sufficient to undo the whole of Wellington's work. He had created an army with complete organization of auxiliary departments. This had been dismembered, and he found himself at the opening of the Waterloo campaign with the whole of the work to do over again. The first thing that he asked for was reserve ammunition-carts and entrenching-tool-carts, about four

* Not quite wholly, for there are interesting details in the diary of Captain Tomkinson of the 16th Light Dragoons.

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hundred and fifty in all, ready horsed. These should have been provided by the Board of Ordnance, but he was obliged to apply to the Commissariat to furnish horses. He requested also, and obtained, bread-waggon from England; but the main trouble in this campaign was not horses, nor waggon, which could be easily provided, but drivers. The dearth of these was such as to weaken Wellington's force of artillery* very seriously. However, the issue of the campaign was decided in four days, so no very important shortcomings were discovered. The Army of Occupation revived and preserved until its withdrawal in 1818 the old efficient commissariat service of the Peninsula.

THE LITTLE WARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE first half of the nineteenth century was a period of constant fighting for the consolidation of the Empire; and, since Parliament refused to maintain a force large enough for the service of the Empire, the Army was terribly overworked. Three out of four infantry battalions were always abroad, and sometimes four out of five. A terrible number of men were killed in tropical garrisons by constant monotonous feeding on salt beef, which drove the men to drink. It would have been easy, and frequently not more expensive, to give the soldier fresh meat; but, as has been said, the Treasury never thought of the army in terms of living men, but always in terms of pounds, shillings

* He was obliged to fall back on post-boys and Hanoverians.

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and pence. A ration was a ration and, if the soldier could not live on it, he must die, and there was an end of the matter. If he were quartered in the dreary and remote solitude of Australia where food was cheap, he was not allowed to profit by it. He was charged twopence to threepence above cost price for his victuals, so that his comrade in the West Indies might be fed the more cheaply. When, however, as occasionally happened, a drought sent food in Australia up to famine-price, then the remedy was simple—to reduce the soldier's daily meals from three to two and give him oatmeal instead of wheaten flour. There was no deliberate inhumanity about this, nothing more than hide-bound official prejudice and thoughtlessness, dignified by the name of economy. The nation's loss through unnecessary destruction of good soldiers must have exceeded enormously any paltry savings accumulated by the false thrift of housing and feeding them badly. But the Commissariat, so long as it remained under the Treasury, was always vitiated by the idea—natural enough in itself—that it existed to look after money and not to look after men. And the Treasury was encouraged in this false policy by the House of Commons.

WARS IN INDIA, 1814-1824.

MOST of our fighting in the nineteenth century was done in India, where the work of the Commissaries was done by the simple method of entrusting it to native contractors. This was all very well in the plains, but the first mountain-campaign—

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that of Nipal—in 1814–1816, was a new experience and raised new difficulties. Promotion in the East India Company's Army went by seniority, and by the time that an officer had reached general rank he was, as a rule, past his work. The helplessness of these poor old men in the face of new problems was pathetic. Ultimately the difficulty of getting supplies up to the front was overcome mainly by employing small armies of hired labourers to make roads.

The Pindarri War of 1817–1819, being more of the usual type, was got through in the usual fashion, by contract, though with much friction and waste of animals; but the Burmese War of 1824–1826 took the British into an unknown country and was very nearly fatal to the army owing to the unexpected tactics of the Burmese.

THE BURMESE WARS OF 1824–1826 AND 1852–1853.

THE Indian Government, having in 1824 little knowledge of Burmah, decided that the war would be a comparatively simple river-campaign and, in order to be sure that the river would be navigable, decided to begin operations at the opening of the rainy season. They counted upon finding native boats, waggons, bullocks and ponies on the spot and upon being able to purchase also a certain quantity of supplies—at any rate fresh meat and vegetables—on the spot. Rangoon was taken without difficulty; but it was found that the Burmese had left nothing in it nor for miles round it—not a boat, not a bullock, not a waggon, not a fowl, not

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so much as a vegetable or an egg. The troops were obliged to sit still and live on ships' provisions until further supplies and some land-transport could reach them from India. The utmost that could be done was to make little raids, with the help of the boats of the fleet, upon such bodies of Burmese as could be reached by water within twenty miles. The result was that the troops, British and native, died by hundreds—even by thousands—of scurvy, dysentery and fever, having nothing to eat but rice, mouldy biscuit and salt pork.

The situation remained unchanged from May until November, when water-transport began to arrive and the first private speculators appeared from India, though the prices that they charged were beyond the means of any but the richer officers. Then a few weeks' operations pushed the Burmese army fifty miles back. The inhabitants, no longer constrained by its presence, swarmed back into Rangoon. Bullocks reappeared; a bazaar was opened for the sale of vegetables and fresh meat; a few boats, though not nearly enough, were recovered, and the Burmese willingly took service under the Commissariat as drivers and rowers. Lastly, at the end of 1824, seven months after the army had landed, seventeen hundred draft cattle from India were safely disembarked.

The force then pushed up the river; but once again the Burmese systematically denuded the country before it. All villages and towns were deserted and everything that could be of service was carried off or destroyed. The Burmese also

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made constant attempts to destroy the British flotillas by floating down fire-craft, steeped in petroleum, upon them. The army had therefore again, with much difficulty, to push the Burmese forces back, so as to permit the population to re-assemble in its rear. And so the process went on; and naturally, the more country that the British could leave pacified and repopulated in their rear, the greater became their resources and the easier the task of transport and supply. The Burmese were poor fighters, or the British could never have taken their country; but the operations, owing to the wretched tracks that were called roads and the steaming heat of a tropical delta, were most exhausting. The main source of supply of course was the Irrawaddy, which bore the floating magazines of the army; and the labour of taking heavy barges up-stream was lessened by the presence of a paddle-wheeled steamer, the first ever used in British warfare. The Indian Government had hoped that the expedition would dictate terms at Ava within six weeks of its landing. It could not bring the Court of Ava to submission in less than twenty months, and even then had not penetrated within fifty miles of Ava. Another column which attempted to climb into the valley of the Irrawaddy over the mountains of Arakan was foiled by the impossibility of feeding the troops, though fever and dysentery saved the Commissariat much labour by killing off the men with terrible rapidity. Of the Europeans employed in this first Burmese war only one in seven survived.

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Only those who have studied the campaign deeply can form any conception of its horrors, through cholera and other fell diseases.

In the Burmese expedition of 1852 some of the lessons of 1824-1826 were laid to heart. A better time of year was chosen and, steamers and watercraft being multiplied, it was hoped that the troops could do all that was required of them with water-transport only. The column advanced up the river far more rapidly, but could not in those districts obtain land-transport. The Burmese therefore had only to move three days' march from the river to be perfectly safe from molestation, and could take their own time for returning. So after all the Indian Government was very unwillingly compelled to provide land-transport, chiefly elephants. One column of two thousand men, including six hundred Europeans, marched through two hundred and forty miles of unknown forest, carrying a month's supplies, four heavy howitzers, four light mortars and some rocket tubes. Its transport consisted of one hundred and twenty elephants, three hundred bullock-carts with teams, and some hundreds of spare bullocks. It started on 14th January, 1853, and picked up some fresh supplies which had been forwarded by water to a convenient point, on 14th February. There eleven hundred men were left; ten days' supplies for nine hundred men were placed on boats, ten days' more supplies on the land-transport, and on the 23rd February the objective was reached without firing a shot. The campaign gave a lesson on the

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fallacy of trusting only to water-transport in a country where a great waterway is indeed the main thoroughfare, but where the population extends far on either bank.

THE AFGHAN WAR OF 1839-1842.

THE most insane adventure of the Indian Government was the expedition sent into Afghanistan in 1839 for the purpose of installing a ruler, friendly to the British but most unwelcome to the Afghans, upon the throne of Kabul. There were two contingents employed, one from Bengal about ten thousand strong and one from Bombay of about half that number. The Bengal column was to move from Ferozepore on the Sutlej; the Bombay column was to land at Karachi. The two were to meet, the Bengal people having marched five hundred miles from their base, and the Bombay people three hundred miles from Karachi; and the whole were then to cross the desert of Sind to the Bolan pass and advance through it to Kandahar and so to Kabul. It was expected that the march would be a bloodless affair; and there was no difficulty in finding native contractors to provide for transport and supply.

The Bengal Commissariat broke down early. The column was timed to leave Ferozepore on 1st December, but the Commissary was not ready until the 10th. His business was to carry with him thirty days' supply of grain and seventy-five days' supply of cattle "on the hoof." The grain supplies alone required over fourteen thousand camels;

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and, as the force was encumbered by forty thousand followers and officers were allowed to take as much baggage as they pleased, there were with the army from twenty-five to thirty thousand camels. It was at first ordered that supplies and stores should travel in the rear of the column. This meant that the camels did not reach their halting place until the early afternoon, when they had to travel far to find fodder and, being driven back at night-fall, had barely two hours to graze. They thus became weak and began to break down at once. There were very heavy losses even in the first week. After a short time it was found imperative to send the camels on in advance ; but this did not improve matters, for the native drivers had a superstitious dread of crossing the Indus, and deserted by hundreds.* Meanwhile the intermediate depots, which were to have been established all the way along the line of march, for relief and replenishment, were in every case found to be deficient. This, however, was the fault not of the Commissaries, but of "political" officers, to whom this task had unwisely been entrusted. After five weeks' march it was discovered that the mortality among the grain-camels was outrunning the consumption of their loads, which was rather significant. The supplies collected on the line of march should have delivered at least a certain number of camels from carrying a load, if only for a few days. But a camel without a load was too great a temptation. The

* Of course these camels were resold to the Government later, many of them probably several times over.

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unfortunate beast was inevitably laid hold of by someone, to have a burden heaped on him for the benefit of some individual, public or private. Thus hundreds of camels were broken down by sheer mismanagement.

Meanwhile the Bombay contingent had landed at Karachi and found itself incapable of moving from want of transport. With enormous difficulty two thousand four hundred camels were after long delay collected from a distance; but it was evident that the Bombay troops would have to depend on the Bengal Commissariat for such help as it could give. This, indeed, was what actually happened; and of course it set the two Commissariats, and indeed the two armies of Bombay and Bengal, at bitter variance.

Meanwhile the Bengal column had crossed the desert to the eastern mouth of the Bolan pass, where it found itself with just one month's supplies to carry it to Kandahar, a distance of two hundred miles, of which sixty lay through the Bolan pass. The general in command, hoping to find twenty days' supplies at Quetta, at once plunged into the pass, where he was not opposed, and arriving at Quetta found no supplies at all. By that time one-third of his camels had perished or disappeared, through desertion or through robbery by the mountain-tribes, and he had only ten days' victuals for his men and two days' grain for his horses. Kandahar was one hundred and fifty miles ahead, with the Khojak pass, a most difficult obstacle, on the way. The nearest depot of victuals was two

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hundred miles in rear. He could move neither forward nor back, so he put his troops on half-rations and his followers on quarter-rations and sat still. The followers lived on fried sheepskins and congealed blood, and all ranks of the army discussed the certain prospect of starvation.

Ten days later arrived the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Keane, who had come from the Bombay Army ; and, as the only possible resource, he ordered an immediate advance. Thereupon sixty cavalry horses, which were too weak to drag themselves further, were shot in a body. The crossing of the Khojak pass was a terrible business ; but on the nineteenth day after leaving Quetta Keane brought the Bengal Army into Kandahar, with just two days' half-rations in hand. It had marched a thousand miles. The Bombay division followed a week later. Both had lost vast numbers of camels, and the loss of horses had been so great that the cavalry was practically dismounted. The Bolan pass was so carpeted with dead animals that the very air was poisoned.

There was none too much grain at Kandahar for both population and army, and the first convoy that came in from the base brought with it, owing to the rascality of native agents, only sixty tons instead of three hundred tons of grain. On the lines of communication and at Kandahar itself the theft of camels was perpetual ; the "political" officer for "political" reasons forbidding the punishment of the robbers. The Governor-General sent Keane strict orders that he must not move

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from Kandahar with less than six weeks' full rations in hand ; and Keane was obliged to await the arrival of another convoy, for he had neither that quantity of grain in store nor the transport to carry it. At last, after waiting two months at Kandahar, he was heartened by the arrival of three thousand camels, carrying a fortnight's supply for the army at full rations. But the owners of these three thousand camels declined to allow them to go further and, what was still more important, their drivers refused to accompany them. So after all Keane was obliged to march for Kabul with nothing but the remains of his former transport, which allowed him to give full rations to his European troops, half-rations to the Indian troops and quarter-rations to the followers. In twenty-five days he came before Ghazni, where he had been told that he would meet with no resistance, and found the fortress fully manned and prepared for resistance. He had three days' supplies left. He could not batter Ghazni because he had left his siege-train behind ; he could not escalade it because the walls were too high ; he could not mine the defences because they were surrounded by a wet ditch ; he could not cow the garrison into surrender by beating the Afghan field army because it was at least five days' march away. Yet he had to take Ghazni somehow and take it at once or perish of starvation. By good luck he succeeded in storming it next day ; and, the place being fully provisioned against a siege, he was able to put his whole army on to full rations for the first

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time for nearly five months, and march comfortably on to Kabul.

Of the follies that followed during the occupation of Afghanistan in 1840 and 1841 nothing can here be said ; but when in 1842 there was need to send a force through the Khyber pass to extricate the troops that still remained in the country, there was, owing to the waste of the two previous years, the greatest difficulty in procuring animals of any kind for transport. The trouble was increased by the fact that the Afghans, becoming aware of the coming evacuation, would sell neither supplies nor cattle to the British garrisons. But the conception and execution of the original invasion of Afghanistan had been so childishy foolish that it was imperative to be quit of the whole enterprise as soon as possible, and by a great effort, not of fighting, but of camel and bullock-buying, this was accomplished. The whole enterprise from first to last cost the lives of over thirty-two thousand animals.

THE SCINDE CAMPAIGN, 1843.

THE force employed in the reduction of Scinde was not above three to four thousand strong,* and had to be content with a bare six hundred camels, all weakened by hard work, that remained at the close of the Afghan war. Sir Charles Napier, however, made it suffice, first, by himself setting the example of frugality in cutting down his personal baggage to the level of a subaltern's. In the Afghan war

* All native troops except one British battalion.

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one commander of a brigade started with sixty camels, which were exclusively devoted to his own comfort. Charles Napier contented himself with five, including those which carried all the papers and records of his head-quarters. Secondly, Napier took extreme care that his camels should be properly loaded and fed ; and it is certain that his loss of camels was singularly small. How he achieved this we are not told, but it can hardly have been otherwise, at any rate at the outset, than by active personal supervision. Wellington had done the like before him in the Mahratta campaign.

OPERATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND, 1845.

THE first active enterprise of the British against the Maoris is perhaps worth mention as a curiosity, though there was no Commissariat on the spot. The scene was the country north of Auckland. The force was four hundred British soldiers ; their base was a British man-of-war anchored in a little bay ; and their objective a Maori fort, some ten miles distant over a wilderness of forest and swamp. The commander loaded his men with five days' biscuit, two days' cooked meat, and thirty extra rounds of ammunition and made a start, but was stopped by forty-eight hours of heavy rain which ruined the biscuit and the ammunition. A second attempt brought him before the fortress, where the Maoris attacked him, and he was obliged to fall back, carrying forty unfortunate wounded men with him. Once again heavy rain had upset his arrangements, impeding his progress and destroying the biscuit.

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In fact he had only been able to reach his objective by keeping his men on half-rations of meat and potatoes for seven days. The men returned dead-beat. Transport of any kind was unprocurable in New Zealand in those times ; and it was ultimately necessary to send for drays and teams to Australia.

THE SIKH WARS.

DURING the two contests against the Sikhs in 1845-1846 and 1848-1849 transport and supply were carried out in the usual fashion by native contractors, not without difficulty, for the Governor-General, anxious to avoid giving provocation to the Sikhs, put off all preparations till the last moment. The most enterprising of these contractors was one Lalla Joti Pershad, who had had to do with the Afghan, the Gwalior and both Sikh campaigns. In 1848 he was pressed to provide for the immediate supply of sixty thousand bullocks for carriage of grain, and at first declined, for the sufficient reason that the Indian Government already owed him £570,000. But he presently consented, and performed his part admirably.

THE KAFFIR WARS, 1834-1835 AND 1851-1853.

THERE was constant trouble with the Kaffirs in Cape Colony throughout the nineteenth century. Their first serious inroad came in 1834 ; and the operations against them took the form of raids by little columns advancing from a chain of frontier-posts to capture the Kaffirs' cattle, which was their one treasure. This led to much bush-fighting and

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great fatigue to the troops. The transport, as usual in South Africa, consisted of hired waggons of the cumbrous kind well known in the country. Sir Harry Smith, who acted as Chief of the Staff and was really the leader of the operations in the field, has left a little note about them: "Our train of Commissariat waggons, each with twenty oxen in it, was immense. With the head-quarters column alone we had one hundred and seventy, occupying about two miles. From the length of these teams I expected great difficulty with them, and certainly took every pains to regulate and divide them into divisions, departments, etc., appointing a captain over the whole. To my astonishment, so excellent were the bullocks that I never had the slightest trouble, and they could march over any country whatever with the troops." It is thus clear that the hiring of the transport alone was left to the Commissaries, and that its organization was taken over wholly by the military. The supplies, it may be mentioned, were brought from the base overland and not by sea, in this war.

In the later campaign of 1851-2 Sir Harry Smith, being then Governor of Cape Colony, again took command. Though he had not only Kaffir invaders to face in front but also a rebellion within the Colony in his rear, he worked from the same chain of frontier-posts, drawing supplies from the sea, which lay on the right flank of the chain. Transport was a great difficulty, for in 1850 a great drought had destroyed many oxen and weakened

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the survivors, while forage was still scarce from the same cause. Moreover the main scene of operations was forest, where ox-waggon could not travel. These, therefore, were used only for replenishing the magazines at the frontier posts, pack-animals being used to accompany the troops in the field. In all, the field-force numbered rather over five thousand and the garrisons about three thousand, two-thirds of the whole being native levies. Owing to the presence of enemies both in front and rear the entire problem of supply was baffling in the extreme. The victualling of the various frontier-posts, along a line of about a hundred miles, even for a few weeks, compelled the use of large unwieldy convoys, every one of which demanded a strong escort; and the accumulation of any great bulk of supplies—for example, of a week's rations for a mobile column—necessarily demanded an increase of the garrison. In a word the more food was collected in one place, the greater was the number of mouths that must be collected to guard and, at the same time, to consume it. Mobile columns escorted so many days' victuals from the advanced base to the scene of action, fought there until their provisions were exhausted, and then escorted their unloaded transport back to the base to begin the same game again. The troops, of course, bivouacked during these excursions, for it was quite impossible to carry any tents with them.* One brigade was in the

* Sometimes for a week or two they had little dog-kennel tents, so small that they could be carried on pack-horses or indeed by a man under his arm.

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field for seven weeks with no tents and only one blanket to each man. They had to move, with musket, bayonet, water-canteen and three days' rations, through dense forest, which tore the clothes off their backs, against a wary, dangerous and invisible enemy, returning wearied out to bivouac in a sea of mud. Sometimes the rain would turn to sleet, and a bitter wind from the snow-capped mountains would chill them to the bone; then the wind would change and they would seek shelter from the overpowering heat of the sun. The natural result was much sickness, which put a fresh strain upon the transport. But though it was physically impossible to bring the men clothing or shelter, Harry Smith recorded with pride that they had never gone without food; and this was a feat which in the peculiar circumstances was worth boasting of. Never were transport and supply, from the filling of the magazines to the delivery of the food to the mouth, more essentially a military operation. None the less Harry Smith both quelled the rebellion and forced the Kaffirs to submission in twelve months; and was then recalled because he had been so slow.

THE CRIMEAN WAR, 1854-1856.

At last, after forty years of peace since Waterloo, England was again engaged against a European enemy, Russia. During those forty years the army had been, as has been told, shamefully overworked, and, owing to the steady pressure of Parliament against military expenditure, every one of the

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auxiliary departments, which had served Wellington in the Peninsula, had been swept away. The Quartermaster-General's Staff Corps, which may be described as the Commander-in-Chief's engineers, as contrasted with the Board of Ordnance's Royal Engineers—a body, composed mainly of artificers, which had done wonderful work in the Peninsula—had been thoughtlessly done away with. The last remnant of the Waggon-Train had been abolished in 1833. There was no Commissariat Establishment in England. That in Ireland, despite of the entreaties of the Treasury that it might be maintained as a nucleus against emergencies, had been done away with. Cavalry and infantry were under one department, artillery and engineers under another, and there was nothing except the Treasury, versed in finance but absolutely ignorant of war, to weld the whole into an army fit to take the field.

The troops, about twenty-six thousand in number, were sent in the first instance to Bulgaria, where also the French, our Allies, disembarked, to aid the Turks in repelling a Russian advance upon Constantinople. They were there from two to three months, during which cholera broke out among them and all ranks became, apart from cholera, much enfeebled by the climate. Upon the Commissariat was thrown the whole duty of providing money, making all contracts for supplies and stores, and furnishing all provisions, forage, fuel and light, and transport whether by land or water. The Commissary-General, Mr. Filder, a veteran of the Peninsula, was indefatigably

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industrious and did his best ; but his subordinates were few and utterly without experience ; and Lord Raglan sent home in 1854 the same report of his Commissariat as had Wellington in 1809. The General almost immediately—in June, 1854—asked the Home Authorities to form for him a Land-Transport Corps and to send it out as soon as possible ; but no notice was taken of this request.

In Bulgaria, Mr. Filder succeeded in collecting a sufficiency of pack-horses from Syria, Turkey and Tunis ; but the Turks had been able to hold back the Russians without assistance ; and in August the French and British Governments ordered their generals to land in the Crimea and attack Sevastopol. Having no forage Filder dared not embark his pack-animals for the Crimea, but sent an immediate requisition for two thousand tons of hay to England, from which the supply was cheapest and should have been quickest. The troops landed on an open beach, the transport-animals of the Commissariat numbering seventy. While the disembarkation was proceeding the Quartermaster-General observed a convoy of native carts, protected by Cossacks, passing not far away, and, hurrying a few troops to the spot, captured about eighty of them. He had hoped to use them to carry tents and entrenching tools, and to serve as regimental ambulances. They were, however, at once claimed—with absolute legal right—by the Commissary, though a few were lent for the transport of hospital-tents and hospital-comforts. It must be added that the troops were,

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physically, so much enfeebled by the Bulgarian climate that the General dared not call upon them to carry their packs, and that they were still constantly dropping down from cholera, so that the Quartermaster-General's solicitude was not misplaced.

The army landed on the 15th of September. A little more transport was hired from the neighbouring villages—bullock-carts and dromedaries—and some droves of sheep and oxen were purchased or driven in. On the 19th the armies marched upon Sevastopol. On the 20th they drove the Russians from a covering position on the river Alma, and could probably—almost certainly—have entered Sevastopol on their heels if the French Commander had accepted the proposal of his English colleague.

The British casualties numbered two thousand, and, as they had no ambulances, it took long to remove the wounded to the landing place on stretchers, in which work the bluejackets of the fleet gave invaluable help. On the 23rd the armies marched again, brushed against the extreme rear of a Russian army, which was retreating inland from Sevastopol, and on the 26th halted over against the southern side of the fortress. Here they regained communication with the sea, which had been temporarily and at great risk abandoned; and the little port of Balaclava, about half a mile long by a quarter of a mile broad, became the British base. It was, of course, far too small for its purpose, and had the further inconvenience of

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being eight miles distant from the camp, which was situated on the top of a bleak, barren plateau overlooking Sevastopol.

The whole situation was most perilous, such, indeed, as no sane government had the right to impose upon any general. The Allied Armies were too weak to invest the place completely, so they were powerless to prevent the Russians from pouring incessantly fresh troops and supplies into it. In fact the Allied generals found themselves with Sevastopol—an arsenal of inexhaustible warlike material—in front, and the whole might of Russia in their flank and rear.

However, they prepared to bombard the fortress, a work which was sufficient to absorb all the energies of the British, who had been much thinned by sickness. On 25th October the Russian army outside Sevastopol advanced against Balaclava and, though repulsed without difficulty, gained the command of the only metalled road that ascended the plateau from the side of Balaclava. On the 5th November, having gathered very large reinforcements, they attacked the Allies in front and rear and ought to have annihilated them, but were repulsed by the British at Inkerman—the only point at which they had pushed their attack home. Hitherto there had been some idea of re-embarking the troops and carrying them to Constantinople for the winter, but after Inkerman the Allied generals realized that to attempt to re-embark would mean destruction. Ever since the previous August the British general had urged upon the

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Government the importance of deciding where the army should winter. The Russians decided the question for them. The Allies, nominally besiegers, were really besieged on a lofty, barren and exposed plateau and must spend the winter there.

Though the growing coldness of the nights had increased sickness in the army, the weather did not finally break until the 14th of November, when a great storm laid the camp flat, tore most of the tents to shreds and turned the track from Balaclava into a sea of mud. The Government had not attempted to form a Land Transport Corps. They did not send any forage until November and then only two hundred tons instead of two thousand, most of which was lost through the wreck of a transport in the storm. Since no soldiers could be spared to make a road, Turks were hired for this work, but these died so fast that one half of them was kept busy burying the other half. For the best part of three months the men had to struggle eight miles out and eight miles back over a morass of mud to fetch their food and, if they had strength to carry it, their winter clothing. Cavalry-horses were pressed into the transport service, but these soon perished from starvation and exposure. The poor creatures ate each other's tails and the spokes of the gun-carriages in their hunger; for all efforts of the Commissary to obtain forage locally had failed. It was a tragical situation. Only eight miles from the camp there was abundance of food and warm clothing. It is true that the Commissariat, being short-handed and in want of proper

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buildings at Balaclava, could not keep their stores in order ; but if soldiers had strength to reach the port they did not return empty-handed. But there was no transport ; and there never was a better example of the saying that any fool can fill a magazine, but that it needs a man to bring the food to the mouth and the clothing to the back. For want of forage there was no transport ; and for want of transport the army was practically annihilated by cold and hunger.

Then the British Government at last bestirred itself. A corps of labourers was sent out* to make a railway from Balaclava. Steps were taken at last to convert Balaclava into a proper base. A little more forage arrived in January, 1855, and by June the last of the two thousand tons asked for in the previous September were actually delivered. Three thousand tents, which had been applied for at the end of November, 1854, gradually presented themselves in the course of five to seven months ; and a floating steam-bakery, which had been requested in November, 1854, made a belated appearance at the end of May, 1855. In the course of the year the Commissariat was suddenly and violently transferred to the War Office—a most significant change—and in March, 1855, from nine to ten months after the general had begged for it, the formation of a Land Transport Corps was begun and an officer,

* This was one of the Government's many experiments in sending out hordes of highly-paid civilians instead of soldiers. These experiments only made the army discontented, for they saw men no better than themselves paid thrice as well, constantly drunk and subject to no discipline. They cost the country millions.

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Colonel McMurdo, was sent out to take charge of it.

This Land Transport Corps was not at the first a success. Hastily improvised organizations very rarely are so. Money was not grudged. Recruits did not come in well at any time during the Crimean War ; but the terms offered to the Land Transport Corps were at the time liberal. The men were enlisted for ten or twelve years, terminable with option of discharge after five years or at the end of the war. The first two thousand men enlisted received a bounty and 1s. 8d. a day ; and those subsequently levied received no bounty and 2s. 6d. a day. Some of the officers were chosen from among deserving non-commissioned officers of other regiments, and a good many came from the Indian army. But in spite of all this extravagance, many of the recruits were mere boys, without any knowledge of horses or driving ; and the demoralization wrought by high pay was not at first corrected by discipline. Most of the officers from India had accepted commissions in the hope that they had found an easy job, for which luxurious habits contracted in India thoroughly fitted them. Thus, though Sevastopol had fallen before the winter of 1855, and the difficulties to be encountered were trifling as compared with those of 1854, the Land Transport Corps was in November, 1855, on the point of breaking down. Thereupon Colonel Wetherall, of the Quarter-master-General's department, one of the best and ablest officers in the Army, took the corps in hand, turned out bad officers right and left, and by

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vigorous and ruthless measures restored order and efficiency. By 1856, when the British Army was for the first time thoroughly equipped for war and the French had had enough of it, the Land Transport Corps had a total strength of over nine thousand men and twenty-four thousand horses, of which number seven thousand men were actually in the Crimea. This was very satisfactory but unfortunately came just two years too late.

Meanwhile the whole Empire had been ransacked to find Commissaries who had some knowledge of their business, and even retired officers were hurried out to the Crimea. The supply proved quite unequal to the demand, and volunteers were sought for in all quarters and accepted without much inquiry. Most of them proved to be useless and expensive encumbrances.

The general result of the changes made during the war was that the transport was organized on a strictly military basis, while supply continued to be a civil matter; for, though the Commissariat had been transferred to the jurisdiction of the War Office, it had no control over the Land Transport Corps. Thus one authority was firmly established in charge of the waggon and another authority over its load; and this unsound principle was steadily upheld.

THE MILITARY TRAIN.

WHEN the war ended in March, 1856, the Land Transport Corps was at once reduced to twelve hundred men, and christened by the new title of

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the Military Train.* Sir William Codrington, who had commanded the army in the Crimea after the close of operations, protested vigorously against this false economy. Such a train, as he truly said, would only suffice for a division ; and he urged not only that every foreign expedition should take its own transport-corps with it, but that the corps should be trained to its duties (which included ambulance-work) at home. He spoke to deaf ears. In the following year, 1858, the Military Train was further cut down to eleven hundred, and Codrington again protested in words which are rather significant. "The Military Train," he said, "should not be kept as a matter of economy to do a variety of dirty things," but put to its right purpose to enable troops to move with their *impedimenta* ; and again he advocated that training should be given in these duties, and that pack-horses should be kept at Aldershot. As a matter of fact, however, circumstances now gave a very strange twist to the career of the Military Train.

THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857-1858, AND THE CHINA EXPEDITION, 1860.

WHEN the Indian Mutiny came, the greater part of the army was gradually sent out to quell it, and among them was represented the Military Train. Lord Strathnairn described it as inefficient

* Its first organization was in battalions, but in 1865 it was made into a single unit. Its predecessor, the Land Transport Corps, was a "non-purchase corps" ; but the Military Train seems to have become really, if not nominally, a "purchase corps."

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for war, the carriages ill adapted to carry either supplies or sick men, and the officers too imitative of the combatant branches of the army. In fact in at least some quarters it had seemed a waste of white men at such a time that they should be non-combatants, and therefore they were converted into a regiment of dragoons and as such did good work. But this experience so encouraged them to regard themselves as combatant soldiers that, when they went out to China in 1860, nominally as a Transport Corps, they continued to act solely as dragoons. They were very smart and faultlessly turned out, but it never occurred to them to help the native hired transport when it was in difficulties, nor to see that the animals were properly fed and watered by the native drivers ; and thus they were of very little use.

But, apart from this, the Military Train was a failure in the field because it dealt only with the organizing and training of drivers, empty waggons and teams into manageable units, thus divorcing responsibility for the waggon from responsibility for the load. To furnish supplies was the duty of the civilian Commissariat ; to transport and deliver them was the business of the Military Train ; to account for them was once more the business of the Commissariat. Colonel Clark Kennedy, Commandant of the Train, confessed openly that such methods could not succeed. " I cannot too strongly express my opinion," he wrote, " that any system based upon the provision of food for the army by the Commissariat and its independent conveyance

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by the Military Train would result in failure in the field. . . . In short, the two branches are so indissolubly united in the field that they must work together, and any attempt to work them independently and without accord would result in loss and injury to the service."

Meanwhile since 1858 the Commissariat had entered upon really practical work in the new camp at Aldershot. By 1860 they had established their own butchery and bakery and were also providing (in return for a stoppage from the soldiers' pay) some allowance of groceries. The system was in process of extension; and at Aldershot, in such little field-operations as were then undertaken, the Military Train worked with the Commissariat in combining transport with supply. But the two departments remained distinct; and this, after Colonel Clark Kennedy's condemnation, could not be allowed to continue.

Since therefore transport and supply must be combined under one head, the question arose whether its organization should be military or semi-military. The first decision was that it should be semi-military. In accordance with the advice of a board of military officers it was decided in 1868 to place all the departments of supply, including treasure, under a single Controller, with subordinate Controllers at the various military stations. But the officers of the Transport Branch were stripped of their combatant rank and placed on the same level with the officers of Supply—the Commissariat. The scheme of Control speedily broke down when

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it was discovered that the Controller enjoyed independent powers as great as the general in command; and that his appointment was really a reversion to the system which, in 1695, had enabled a Commissary to wreck all military operations. The members of the Commission had never heard of the little book, narrating this strange experience, which had been published by Colonel Luke Lillingston in 1704.

In 1875 the united Commissariat and Transport were erected into a separate corps which languished under discouraging conditions until 1880, when its status was improved, and its name was changed to the Commissariat and Transport Staff, with a provision that its officers should be taken from the Line and should have served in it for not less than five years. Finally in 1888 was formed the Army Service Corps, in which combatant rank was restored to the officers, who were still taken from other branches of the service, but received special training in the theory and practice of their particular business. The rule that its officers should have served in the Line was maintained, so that they should know the requirements of fighting men and sympathize with them. Thus, after two centuries of struggle, the organization both of Transport and Supply was placed permanently upon a military footing, and the army was provided at last with the most important of its auxiliary services.

The army at that time being still rather a collection of regiments than an army, the regiment or battalion was selected as the lowest unit to be

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self-equipped. The first division of transport was therefore named the Regimental Transport, which fell into two branches: (1) the Fighting Transport for the conveyance of ammunition, entrenching tools and such like (in old days partly provided for by "bat, baggage and forage allowance"); (2) the Subsistence Transport, carrying one or two days' food and forage. An officer, a sergeant (in a European war), and drivers were to be furnished by the unit for this Regimental Transport.

The second division was the Replenishing Transport or Supply Column, calculated also to carry one or two days' supplies. These Supply columns were organized for the larger units—the Cavalry Brigade, the Infantry Brigade, Divisional Troops and Corps Troops. To each of these units was assigned a company of the Army Service Corps with all the necessary equipment for butchering, distribution and account-keeping.

The third division was the Supply Park or Rolling Magazine, organized to carry at least three days' supplies for the men and animals of the army, and equally under the charge of the Army Service Corps.

A fourth division, designed to take the place of a railway, where no railway might exist, for the replenishment of the Supply Park, was called the Auxiliary Transport and was likewise under charge of the Corps.

Such was the Army Service Corps when first called into being before the days of motor-traction.

A word may be said of the man who was chiefly responsible for the making of the Army Service

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Corps, Sir Redvers Buller. He was a younger son of an old Devon county family and was brought up as a boy to fishing, shooting and hunting. He was a good horseman and a still better whip. Serving with his regiment as a subaltern in Canada, he spent his leave always in the wilds and became an expert axeman and canoe-man, and something of a trapper. He could himself shoe a horse and mend harness and saddlery, and later, for special behoof of the Army Service Corps, he made a special study of carriage-building. He also passed the Staff College. Succeeding to his father's estate, he took to practical farming and stock-breeding; and there was no better judge of Devon cattle. In fact there was little about cultivation, stock and horses (for he had made some study of veterinary surgery) that he did not know; and, being also something of a mathematician and an architect, he and his brother designed a roof of special construction to cover a wide space, which still exists. Having seen many campaigns in China, the Red River, Ashanti, South Africa and the Soudan, he learned early the work of an army in the field with five different descriptions of transport; and his Victoria Cross attested his worth as a fighting soldier. Add to this a thorough understanding of the British soldier; and you have such a combination of qualities for this special task as is rarely to be found in one man. He did much for the Army, but his greatest work was the foundation of the Army Service Corps.



